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# CONVICTION.

## A Tale.

BY

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IN THREE VOLUMES.

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# CONVICTION.

## CHAPTER I.

COLONEL DORNFORD at last felt himself settled in his home. The purpose for which the demonstration at Chaveley had been made was perfectly accomplished, and a chain of vidittes had been established, which communicated without interruption with both extremities of the royal army. War had not assumed the scientific cha-

racter with which, at the close of the seventeenth and the beginning of the eighteenth centuries, it was conducted, and the expeditions which arose out of the contest between Charles and his Parliament, partook more of the nature of the isolated efforts of the age of chivalry, which had preceded than of the mental combination which afterwards, often in fields of the sorest conflict, rendered numbers useless, and physical power a secondary quality. The establishment of these videttes gave opportunity for exhibiting the best quality of both species of warfare, and Colonel Dornford, with that military prescience which experience began to give to men of ability on both sides, made the most of his opportunities.

Temporary excursions of the enemy would occasionally interrupt his communications, and the skirmishes to which they led were sometimes not a little severe; but the loss had been trivial, and a great benefit ensued from the confidence of the men in

themselves, which they gained by repeated trials, and their experience of all the manœuvres of party compaigning. The opportunities for testing their strength were, by no means, seldon, for Ireton, whom few men exceeded in decision or perseverance, was stationed, in considerable strength, on the borders of the neighbouring county, while Cromwell, who was fast rising into note, had lately joined him with a numerous body of fresh troops, chiefly cavalry, and infused the impetus of his own impetuous courage into proceedings, which, without him, would have been more dilatory, and therefore, less influential, though not less determined.

But the men stationed at Chaveley, were fighting on their own ground, and under the eye of their landlord, and in the presence of their own relatives. Every foot for miles round was intimately known to them, and by their knowledge of short cuts, and the peculiarity of the place, they were often enabled to intercept and act

effectively against far more numerous parties of their opponents. In addition to this, the inhabitants of the district were all their friends, and the influence of the war, increased by the position of the Colonel, who was universally beloved, had so bound them together that they acted with a common mind. And though sufficiently shrewd to avoid giving open palpable offence to the Parliamentarians while present, they did them all the injury in their power; and gave every information they could gather to their friends, the royalists. If one of the other side were wounded, there was no safe asylum but Ireton's camp, for if consigned to the care of the cottagers he was either in some cases little cared for, or on one pretext or other, consigned to the custody of some detachment from the Abbey.

The losses from this cause at length became so serious that the deficiency to Ireton began to be numbered by hundreds; while the garrison at Chaveley and the men at the

dependent posts came to look upon the chance of a collision as a source of excellent amusement; and an excursion or a foray was hailed by every man in the force as a pleasure jaunt, in which he hoped to be a party. Casualities did occasionally occur but nine times out of ten the nearest relatives of the wounded lived within a short distance, and the soldier divested of his arms and accoutrements, resumed the character once more of a harmless peasant, and was nursed at the house of his immediate connections. As Colonel Dornford felt for all these dependents as if they were members of his own family medical attendance and every other comfort were always at hand to soften the pain that must, of necessity, be endured, and there were always comrades at hand who dropped in to wile away the tedium of recovery by accounts of their expeditions and tales of the barrack-room proceedings.

When no immediate danger threatened the Colonel was always ready to relax the

strictness of discipline, for he knew he could invariably rely upon the activity and fidelity of his retainers, and then the men sometimes for days together might be seen scattered over the fields, assisting their friends and neighbours in those rural occupations for which they had been intrusted, and which now came to them with the freshness of a recreation. One or two surprises had, however, taught them to be cautious, and those who on leave were thus occupied, were always now enjoined to have arms ready to seize upon, though not in their hands.

Trenton Daubigny was their most frequent leader; and so uniformly successful had he been through the exercise of that careful foresight which distinguished him, and by a gallantry always conspicuous, but which was especially so in times of the greatest need, that they felt the most unbounded confidence in all that he undertook, and no sooner was it known that Captain Daubigny was to lead, than the volunteers were so

numerous that it was difficult to make a choice. Colonel Dornford at last smilingly told Trenton that he was to cut off all his friends, and only allow such followers as the necessary routine provided.

Much of this popularity was undoubtedly owing to a rule which Trenton invariably adopted, of never leaving a follower behind him. He never undertook an enterprise without some fair reason induced a supposition of success, unless the exigency of a moment compelled a movement which prudence would not warrant, and acting on the soldier's plea of necessity he risked all to gain all,—and he had never failed. Under any emergency he invariably intimated to his men that they were to link themselves as a band of brothers, and never to leave or forsake each other even in the last extremity. He made a point of invariably keeping his men well in hand, so that a loss to the enemy, by capture, had never occurred except in two or three instances where the deficiency was a gain.

In all other cases he had brought off every man whether living or dead. The wounded were sure of the affectionate attendance of their relatives, and when in the few chances a mournful procession had left the body of a comrade at the house of his friend, the party felt the assurance that under any circumstances they would never be deserted. The consequence was a courage which nothing could daunt, and an attachment to their leader, which ensured such an immediate and implicit obedience as often carried them through inestimable difficulties, and obtained a triumph when defeat seemed unavoidable; while a constant sharing in all privations, and a more than sharing in all danger secured the respect as well as the attachment of his men.

Colonel Dornford had, through Trenton's instrumentality, been relieved of much of the anxiety of a host, and he had thus been enabled to dwell upon his private affairs. A message one morning ar-

rived from Major Palser, which had strengthened his desire to learn more of his family, and having neglected his secret correspondence, he hastened to rectify the omission. With a heart throbbing with trumultuous emotion, and with a foot unsteady from nervous anxiety, he entered the corridor. Every object was still, and not the slightest intimation, presented itself that his unknown visitant had ever appeared. In vain he tried the boards from one end to the other. In vain he examined every crank and cranny; neither mark, nor note, nor paper was to be seen. The thought of the partition which had barred his entrance to his own apartments on the day of his arrival recurred to his mind, and he determined again to examine the wall, and endeavour to ascertain the reason for that singular circumstance. With a doubtful spirit, he accordingly turned his footsteps thither, half with the expectation of finding that he had been self-deceived, and that no such hindrance as he imagined existed. A

repetition of his examination soon convinced him of the truth of his impressions, for the wall was, indeed, thus placed as an impediment, and a complete one, to any ingress to the apartment.

To fathom this mystery, appeared to Colonel Dornton an impossibility without further enquiry, and some time would be necessary to effect this, for the masonry was constructed with such peculiar art that it seemed to be a portion of the antique building itself, having all the appearance of years, and as if embrowned and consolidated by time. With not a little curiosity, he went from the place to give orders for the demolition of the wall, and turned into the little monastic garden until it should be accomplished.

Little more than a couple of hours were necessary for the business. when the Colonel was informed that his orders were completed, and the way lay open for his entrance into the scene of the greatest happiness that man can enjoy on this side

of Heaven. Yet how fickle and uncertain is poor nature. It would seem as if, notwithstanding our daily experience, we never can become acquainted with ourselves. If we attempt to fathom the intellect with which the Most High has endowed us; we try its depths—its justness—its extent, and day by day we proceed with new discoveries, when we seem to arrive at the point, at which its lofty powers shall be stayed some new discovery, some new achievment in literature or science opens a fresh world for the exercise of its energies, and brings some new field of nature within the dominion of its reason to know how definitely and fully imposed is the impress of omnipotence upon the soul.

So also is it with feeling. When the heart appears to have learned its lesson of submission, and every nerve seems to have attained its tension, to the requirement of the moment, some slight note comes up into the memory from the harmony of bye-gone happiness to open, to its own perceptions,

new depths of affection and of love, when the heart had thought that its music had been so jarred, or its chords so depressed that it could never have responded to the tone again. Or it may be when the imagination has flagged beneath the frequent and long continued recurrence to the objects that served as keys to joys that are passed, and the spirit thinks, oh, how vainly that it can survey these sources of remembrance without distress or dismay, there wants but one or two little objects to pour the flood of recollection on the heart, and the whole man immediately owns its allegiance to the world of spirits, and bows to the despotism of that love which God alone could have inflated, and acknowledges that it is the unseen things which are eternal.

Colonel Dornford had given the orders for the demolition of this wall, though not without emotion, yet without any apprehension that the feelings, over which he had now, for years, been in the habit of exercising such continual control, would require

much more than the ordinary curb to suppress their overflow on the present occasion. But grievously, indeed, was he mistaken in the supposition that years of toil, danger, and absence, could have subdued to stillness any of those springs of bursting affliction, with which his soul was filled. He crossed the threshold, and entered the little ante-room to the *suite*. It offered no object on which his thoughts could rest, except its bare but well-remembered walls, and he smiled internally at the supposition that he could be affected as strongly as he imagined by the sight of those familiar things, that would make him once more feel the sence of his widowhood and desolation; but when he laid his hand upon the lock that led into what had formerly been his breakfast-room, it trembled, and for a moment, his heart failed him, and he drew back. A passing trepidation thrilled his frame: but he summoned the firmness of which he thought but just before he could

have boasted so much, and he opened the door, and entered.

The *suite* ran out from the main building under the gallery, and commanded a view of a little private garden which had always been considered as the peculiar retirement of Lady Dornford, and had a sweet air of seclusion which seemed to shut in happiness while it shut out the world. Their apartments appeared never to have been discovered by the late inhabitants of the abbey, for not only was every thing in its place untouched, but free from dust, and evincing every appearance of being kept with care, and a regard for the taste and feelings of its occupants. At first he surveyed all around with comparative indifference. He had been determined to be firm, and firm he was. He felt that ceaseless sorrow is only repining against the decrees of Him who has alike the power to give, and the right to take away. With a strong heart, he endeavoured to survey every well-re-

membered object about him, and to think of those who were not as if they were ; though unseen, still the same to him, only separated by the veil that divides time from eternity —a veil that the Gospel is every day making thinner and thinner in its texture, and filling with rents, through which the eye of faith may peep into the realms beyond.

The dim aerial presence of the spirits of those he loved spoke to his soul out of the silence around, and he held sweet yet real communion with them. He saw how the invisible things of God are seen by the things that are visible, and he walked through every room—he examined each article of furniture, and again and again he went from one to another, as if they were indeed animate companions, who could speak as loudly, as they did plainly, of the times that were passed. But the mind yearns for an interchange of thought, and the heart longs and sickens for an interchange of affection. The things around him could speak, but they could not reply. In vain did he ask

where were the loved beings whom he sought, but found not. The deep and deathly stillness was broken by no sound ; not even the hum of an insect broke the silence. One by one the gathering thoughts came up, which accumulated the knowledge of his lonely widowhood. One by one each earnest affliction that the husband and the father only can know increased, and grew with their tearing claims upon him. The mingling fancies, and the heart's-suggested visions, increased in power and multiplied in number, till they bore down all the opposition which his fortitude had reared, and throwing himself upon a couch, he tried in vain to shut both the present and the past from before his eyes. Nature asserted her supreme sway, and the strong man bowed, broken, and subdued, bent before the storm of sorrow that assailed him, and rushed from the room. To make a second attempt, he felt to be impossible, and he determined to call Trenton Daubigny to his aid.

When the spirit was somewhat calmed

the Colonel descended to his withdrawing-room to regain the equanimity which had been so fearfully moved. There, away from the scene, and retired from the bustle of the garrison, his heart grew with its trials, and he could reflect with calmness. The stillness of the scene, on which the portraitures of many that were dear to him looked down, infused its quietude into his soul. A gentle breeze played upon the shrubs without, and the perfume of a thousand flowers came in through the open window with balmy fragrance. The rain-drops from a late shower stood like myriads of diamonds on every leaf.

These things had their effect upon him, and, with a more assured heart, the Colonel sent to summon Trenton to his presence; but Daubigny had that morning proceeded on an expedition which was likely to occupy him till the morrow, and the Colonel was again thrown upon the resources of his own internal strength.

Trenton had departed high in hope, and

with a resolved courage, and with more of that military spirit of hatred to his enemies than he had been accustomed to show. The first object which had engaged his thoughts on the morning after his adventure with the fair being at the cottage, had been her strange intimation, and obscure hints of danger. These, in accordance with his duty, he had conveyed to the Colonel in his reports, and had been surprised that no particular notice had been taken of them.

Leaving them, however, to work their proper effect, he had hurried, soon as his duties would allow him, to the cottage. Nothing but a scene of desolation met his eye. The humble roof that had sheltered the good Rector, lay a blackened and smouldering heap of ruins, and not a vestige appeared left to tell whither the spoilers had gone. One means of information alone remained. The half-witted boy, who, with all his apparent inability to reason upon things as they appeared to others, seemed gifted with a shrewdness which often gave

to him an air of intuitive perception into the causes of effects, was standing with a disconsolate air near the ruins.

Hopeless of obtaining any useful intimation, and rather with that feeling which, in the hour of trouble, induces us to look for companionship, Trenton turned to the lad, and inquired whither the Rector had retired.

"Hur does not know—hur cannot tell," replied the urchin, clapping his hands together, and then swinging round in that vain fantastical manner to which, when at liberty, he yielded when strongly excited.

"But, my man," replied Trenton, "you know how the house became on fire?"

The boy shook his head, as if in the possession of some secret which he dared not to reveal. By a little coaxing he was induced to say, that the "sodgers" had done this.

In a moment Trenton obtained a clue to the whole proceeding; he determined immediately to pursue the enemy, and if

possible reclaim the spoil. As he uttered this intention, the poor urchin, who for the last few moments had been intently watching his countenance, suddenly broke forth into exclamations of the wildest delight, clapped his hands, leapt into the air, and screamed with joy. As if to ensure the resolutiou he had just heard, he seized upon Trenton's hand, and led him away, and as if to remind him of the happiness which had been enjoyed on that spot, pointed to the several rooms, and by significant though silent signs called upon him to rescue his patrons from their trouble.

Little reasoning was requisite to influence Trenton's movements in such a case. He demanded and immediately obtained a strong detachment to scour the country. This force was composed of volunteers, and twice as strong as he deemed necessary. Traces of the hostile party were slight, and almost insufficient to enable him to learn the way they had taken; but the ride of a few miles brought him upon their track.

Their chief leaders had left them, and success had induced a negligence of defence as soon as they felt themselves beyond the lines of their opponents. Trenton found them encamped by the side of a gentle stream. Surprised by the appearance of an enemy they had yet stood manfully to their arms, but their scattered body was unable to resist the charges with which the royalists drove through the ground. The whole party were taken or dispersed, and Trenton returned in triumph with his aged and venerable friend.

## CHAPTER II.

"Sweet are the lessons of adversity."

It was with a thankful and grateful heart that the good rector once more entered the boundaries of his parish. Had Helen been with them, notwithstanding the poverty of his circumstances, he felt as if his happiness would have been complete. This was an enjoyment at present denied to him, and it was a source of heartrending misery when he detailed to Trenton how he had been deprived of his child. But there was comfort in the thought, that the same

blessed Providence which had delivered him out of the hands of his enemies could as easily restore her who was dearer to him than life itself.

The young soldier heard the news of Helen's appearance and loss with deep and unfeigned regret, and he determined to use every means to ascertain where she had been conveyed. In the meantime, present duties must not be neglected, and he took the necessary means to provide the aged couple with a home. All his persuasions to induce them to stay at the Abbey were unavailing, and having, therefore, again seen them settled in a neighbouring cottage, he hastened to report his proceedings.

To the colonel the papers he had received by the messenger brought matter for much wonder. Enclosed in a wrapper, on which were written a few words of caution respecting his household, was the very dispatch that had been abstracted from his possession on the day of his arrival at Chaveley, and with it a series of hierogly-

phic characters, whose meaning he could not comprehend; an intimation of the capture of Heseltine, and the probable surprise of Sir Hugh Palser and his party. The whole of these circumstances were matter of serious moment. If Sir Hugh were taken, not only would the government lose the advantage of having Sir Edward Martell a prisoner, and of obtaining from him information which the colonel felt assured he was able to give, but they would also remain in ignorance of his own need of supplies, while the enemy would, at the same time, become aware of it—probably attack him in force—destroy or drive out his garrison, and then obtain that, which, from the movements of the royal troops, and which, partly from a reliance on Colonel Dornford's steadiness and prudence, was the key of the king's position. Moreover, there was an intimation that, by applying to a certain person, a discovery would be made of the utmost importance to the

party which he served, while he would also learn the residence and position of both Edith and Albert.

There was amply sufficient to excite the Colonel's utmost surprise; and, at the first perusal of the contents of the papers, incredulity so strongly arose within him, that he was prompted to treat the whole as a manœuvre to mislead him for some purpose which he could not apprehend; but a closer examination of the matter convinced him that this packet was not intended solely to delude. If there had been any political purpose to serve by his injury, certainly no intimation would have been given to him that he was exposed to danger in a way that he could not anticipate; nor would the means of eluding injury to his sovereign, and those who served him, have been so fully, though mysteriously, laid open to him. Neither, if an enemy had done this, would there have been any of that care for his happiness, which was here so plainly inti-

mated, and which touched him in the tenderest point. There seemed to be a perfect knowledge of his character, for the necessity of attending to the welfare of his children was dwelt upon in a way that fully indicated the writer's knowledge of the tenderness of his affection.

The more he considered these mysterious documents, the more was he perplexed to come at a right conclusion respecting them. The course which duty to his Sovereign enjoined him to take, was so aptly coincident with that, which regard for his children prompted, that he felt not only thankful for it, but doubly eager to pursue the path pointed out, while the difficulties were so numerous, and the efforts to be made so various, that, if convinced of the necessity of making them, he knew not well how to proceed. Whatever had been the writer's object in so putting it, the caution respecting his household was so obscurely given, that he could not perceive to what portion

the allusion was made. Of his domestic servants he entertained no doubts; and yet, from the length of his absence, the emergencies in which they had been placed, and the demoralization so common in the country in similar establishments, rendered him dubious who to trust, while the mysterious blocking up of his own private *suite* of apartments, and the especial care evidenced in them which had been previously occupied by himself, was an inexplicable circumstance which, while they seemed to augur good will—and that of the kindest intentions, rather than otherwise—yet also certainly evinced that there was an agency about him, and at work within his own dwelling, over which he had no control, and the means of which he could not discover. An examination of the servants on these points had proved utterly fruitless, and, to reiterate the attempt, would only be evincing the extent of his own ignorance of the matter, and the depth of his anxiety, and, perhaps, putting himself more into the

power of the unseen party without attaining any useful object.

He in no way credited the reports among his dependents, that all this had been brought about by means of the supernatural powers, who had, for centuries, interfered in the concerns of the abbey and its inhabitants, and could not even then restrain a smile as his mind recurred to the extraordinary tale which Greetwell had recited to him the previous evening when retiring to rest, and by which he was given to understand that individuals, sometimes in the dress of ecclesiastics, and sometimes of laymen—sometimes of men and sometimes of the softer sex, were both seen and heard in the forbidden apartments.

To him the probability of any one gaining access to the abbey, and remaining undiscovered for months and even years, during the occupancy of the parliamentarian troops, appeared so utterly impossible that it amounted to a perfect absurdity. The secret passages in the building he knew

might favour such a concealment for a time, but with these he believed himself to be perfectly acquainted, though the ingress of Sir Edward Martell and his party had shown that the parliamentarians were not ignorant of them. He dismissed the supposition therefore of that means being available for a continued mystery as altogether untenable, and concluded that the rebels themselves had closed up that suite in order to restrict the extent of the garrison; the idea appearing to be the more rational as those rooms communicated in no way, that the colonel was aware of, with the outer part of the building or with the lower apartments.

Then as to doubts of the troops he had with him, that was a matter of minor consideration. Most of them were men from his own estate, on whom he knew he could depend; besides their power of injuring was too trifling, and he was aware that he could rely upon the integrity and vigilance of their officers. Any inquiry of the messen-

ger, who had brought the dispatches, was useless; for the person, from whom he had received them, appeared, from the account he had given on his first arrival, no more than an agent like himself, and he was now, owing to the fatigue he had passed through and the good cheer of which he had partaken, in such a state of happy somnolency that no attempts to arouse him to a state of conscious intelligence had succeeded. Indeed, Master Metcalfe could be as stupid as any one when he chose, and it was as much out of his power, as inconsistent with his inclination, to give any more plausible account of his mission than was contained in his previous answers, and which, in his present state of drowsiness and fatigue, he did not see any necessity to recapitulate. He was accordingly left to finish his repose by the kitchen hearth.

Such a state of neutral suspense was by no means in accordance with Colonel Dornford's natural activity and energy. He was not one to stand by, and idly suffer the cur-

rent of events to carry him whither it would, when it was his duty to direct the stream. After several hours communing within himself, he determined to call in the aid of Daubigny to assist in unravelling the clue, and guide him to the object to which it was attached. Daubigny readily obeyed his summons.

"I nave sent for you, Trenton, my boy," said the Colonel, "for I wish for the benefit of advice without publicity."

"You flatter me, my kind benefactor," returned Daubigny, his heart warming with gratitude for the distinction, "and I shall be indeed happy if my poor thoughts can be of any service."

"We know not what they may tend to avail; at any rate, they may throw some light on a difficulty which I feel myself incompetent to unravel. What think you of these documents?" and the Colonel laid before him the papers which Metcalfe had brought.

"The intimation, respecting Sir Hugh

and his party, as well as Heseltine, are plain enough," said the Lieutenant, "and prove, at least, that they come from no unfriendly hand."

"And that their contents may, therefore, be relied upon," said the Colonel, interrupting.

"Precisely so," answered Daubigny, "but their connection I do not fully perceive. These documents would seem to intimate that our opponents are not all apparent, but that we have other enemies beside the rebels in arms. Why you should be made a political engine of I cannot conceive, except that the abbey is a place of strength, and certainly a key of the country. The power which the King holds in this neighbourhood has set at nought the efforts of the parliament to obtain a sure footing; but they have allies of whom we know not, and I fear that we are treading over concealed fires which are ever ready to open and consume us. You have obtained no information respecting Miss Dornford?"

Daubigny continued, as a blush unfortunately suffused his features.

"None except in a way that seemed to mock my senses, and were I not assured of being wide awake at the time, should have demeed I was dreaming, and this supposition of yours is confirmed by the circumstances which have occurred to me. The loss of the dispatch, and this secret communication assure me that we have those around us—of whom we know nought—," and the Colonel related the secret interview which had been appointed but never kept. "Much do I blame myself," he continued, for my inadvertence on that morning; but the evil is now passed remedy."

"Perhaps not," returned Trenton, "and those papers would seem to offer the solution of the mystery."

"If we knew but how to apply them."

"That can only be done by recurring to the source to which we are directed."

"The attempt is full of hazards," returned the Colonel; "for London, I am

told, is more strictly guarded than ever, and the last emissary of the King, who was discovered there, was unhesitatingly put to death by the populace. There is therefore little doubt but that the report of the affair at Burford, of which our messenger speaks, has reached there by this time, and that would make any attempt additionally dangerous. Besides it would be a matter of much delicacy, and I do not know to whom to entrust the errand.

"If you could rely upon me," said his *protegé*, hesitating, "I shall at least be ready to make the attempt."

"You, my boy, you!" exclaimed the Colonel, suddenly turning in his walk, "I could not think of exposing you to such hazard."

"Why not; I would incur ten times more, readily, for your sake and Miss Dornford's—that is for the King's service."

"The last is indeed a reason," returned his superior. "Well, Trenton, I will not

be behind hand with you in generosity, though I deeply regret exposing you to so much danger."

"Think not of that, my dear sir," returned Trenton, warmly, and delighted at the prospect at last of being in search, and perhaps of discovering Edith. "With all the streets and alleys of the city I am well acquainted; and I think that if I can take this messenger as an attendant, my real character may be so disguised as to escape suspicion."

"This journey hither," the Colonel replied, "would seem to indicate readiness of wit, while certainly, however disguised, nobody would ever take him for a soldier. Greetwell assures me that he is hearty in the cause, and, therefore, I doubt not of his readiness to attend you, and he is acquainted, this letter states, with the person of the party to whom we are directed."

To do the cobbler justice, the Colonel over-rated Master Metcalfe's zeal or ability, and was not sufficiently acquainted with his

peculiar fondness for strong liquors, to be aware of the danger of associating him in a mission of this kind. But those were times in which men were frequently obliged to rely, in great straits, on small dependencies and after all there was much real, though, perhaps, but little apparent prudence in the choice.

"There is a certain merchant, one Flockley, who lives hard by the Barbican, to whom when a gallant in waiting on the Duke of Buckingham, I once did good service, and who will be ready, I feel assured, to render you any assistance. He gave me this ring as a memorial of the kindness, and I have fortunately preserved it. Take it with you, and it will be a sufficient assurance to him that you come from me. He has done the King's cause a benefit before now, and will perhaps be a worthy assistant. The distance of his residence from the place where this man Oliver stops, may prove of advantage rather than otherwise."

"When think you I had better depart."

"That is a matter of comparatively little moment. And yet as we do certainly appear to have these secret agents about us, perhaps the right plan would be to be as silent in our movements as possible. To-night you had better be away from the Abbey, though there is no absolute necessity for your commencing the journey before the morning; but I think you should be on the road at least two hours before day-break!

To this arrangement Daubigny readily assented. The enterprise was one of danger, difficulty and importance, and was well calculated to excite the spirit of adventure to which his ardent mind was prone. If he failed, the injury to the cause he espoused, would but be negative, whilst success might bring the most useful results and distinguish him highly, both in the eyes of his sovereign and the country. Every consideration urged him to the development of a naturally powerful character,

and he was perfectly ready to risk all that he had in the attainment of his object. The circumstances of the period were such that he could not rationally count on a speedy re-union with his friends, and when he wrung the hands of his brother officers, they perceived a lingering uneasiness with which the countenance of Trenton Daubigny was seldom clouded.

With his associate in the enterprise he was hardly satisfied, but when upon emerging from the dark porch of the Abbey, he felt free from the presence of his companions his thoughts took the turn to which, since the announcement of Colonel Dornford, they had been settling, and the earnest longing for again seeing and conversing with Helen absorbed every other desire. The venerable pastor received him with the kindness of a father, and his excellent helpmate with such an abundance of anxious affection as more than once brought the tears into the eyes of their youthful friend.

It had been arranged that the Colonel

should provide everything needful for his journey; and himself conduct Metcalfe, who was to be kept in ignorance of his destination, to the cottage which Mr. Endsleigh occupied. When the hour for departure should arrive, and after a brief attention to his military duties, and preparation of the papers for the successor in his command, Daubigny prepared to consign himself to the hospitality of the venerable couple, whose guest he was for the night to remain. With such converse and associates the time was not likely to pass idly or unprofitably away, and when the early hour for his retirement to rest arrived, it found him in the possession of new impulses to his principles, and greater depths in his affections.

The night was obscure, cloudy, and fitful, and sometimes violent gusts of wind swept with its hoarse rush across the country, while at intervals of every few minutes a few drops of rain plashed upon the face of Trenton, as with his cloak

wrapped round him he walked his silent way across the demesne of the abbey.

Anxious to fulfil to the uttermost the desire of the Colonel, in whom the intimation of danger within his household had excited much apprehension, Daubigny carefully avoided the posts of the sentinels, every now and then taking shelter beneath the covering of a hedge, or in the deeper umbrage of a tree. Once only was he challenged, and as he recognised the hoarse voice of one of his own troopers he was about to pass on, but the next instant while it brought a pleasing feeling at the man's fidelity, and a momentary smile across his lips it brought also a perception of his imminent danger, and as he again heard the man demand in a more rough and peremptory tone, "Who's there," followed immediately by the click of the lock of his carbine, he stood perfectly still, and drawing the skirts of his cloak tightly about his limbs he bent his head within the collar, and if perceived at all, through the deep obscurity might well

have been taken for the stump of a tree, or one of those shadows which flit across the eyes when they endeavour to pierce into the recesses of deep darkness.

To say that Trenton had never known fear would be to assert that he was without the lively apprehensions of the consequences of things which is one of the closest attendants upon genius and rapidity of penetrating perception. But he possessed that higher and nobler courage which, in the performance of duty, perceives all the danger, and determines to encounter it; which, in the imminence of injury retaines that cool self-possession and use of its faculties; and so frequently enables the brave man to overcome the danger and to avert it; while the coward falls a victim to his fears, and while the nervous system is more strongly strong in proportion to the risk, there is a concentration of energy, with the greater ability to wield its powers with effect.

The headlong enthusiasm which actuated his great natural intrepidity in the early

part of his career had been sobered down by successive contests, and blazed not out as it had formerly done in a continual flame, but smouldered in the heart. It was nurtured in the spirit till fitting occasions called it forth, and then it streamed in one gush of determined force which carried him on like a flash of light in a charge upon the squadrons of the enemy.

Yet this was done without expending its fulness in the onslaught; for with him the soul once raised, there seemed to be a new and more active alliance between his heart and intellect; and after the flash there came the deep continued lengthened roll of awful thunder as it cracks claps, opens and redoubles above the head as if about to rend the skies. Like the descent of the thunderbolt, fierceness his fell upon those who opposed his progress and his long straight broadsword swept large gaps around him, till he saw the proper moment to stay his course. Then with his good weapon hanging by the tassel to his gloved wrist, he

would gallop down the van of his force, rallying and arranging his men as the broken foe fled in destructive rout from his face.

It was his coolness, combined with the intrepid activity already noticed, which made Daubigny so able an assistant in the field, and the dressing of a broken charge his distinguishing forte. So frequent had he excited the admiration of his fellow soldiers both by his readiness of thought in the *melée* as well as by his coolness when retiring from overpowering masses of the enemy as he rode in the rear of his men, while the bullets showered like summer drops around him, that their confidence in him almost invariably led them on to success, and indeed often obtained it when other troops, with equally instinctive courage would have fallen.

He had, therefore, none of that uncertain daring which will sometimes carry a man with honour through the battle field, where his valour is shown in a thousand ways,

while death is busy around him, and then quails when some unexpected and unlooked for evil assails him, with solitude alone to witness his destruction. Pride and the spirit of honour carries many a man through difficulties in the face of the world, which he dared not attempt in private, and to which his real courage is totally unequal.

Such, however, was not the case with Daubigny. His courage was based, doubtless, on mental organisation ; but was superior to its influence, and was built upon a principle of duty on which he invariably acted. He persevered in a course of right conduct, and had made up his mind to incur all the hazards it might bring, in whatever shape or extremity they might come, and whenever they might arise. Therefore, it was that he became superior to casual circumstances, and was as ready to leave his body, if needs must, in the furrow of some land away from the world and its inducements, as upon the well fought field, with

thousands around to attest his courage, and to sing his praise.

Yet are we all sensitive to the sympathies of our fellow men, and he is but a cold-blooded carl to whom the prospect of fame adds no impulse. The darkness of night, moreover, and a position where it is possible a man's motives may be misunderstood, throws a damp upon the firmest spirit, and as Trenton listened to that little sound, he knew that certain death was ready within a few feet to be levelled at him it required all the self-command he could muster to stand unmoved within the reach of such danger. Once he was about to call to the sentry, who would have immediately recognised his voice; but the recollection that his perfect secresy would be broken —that the object of his mission might be thereby defeated— as indeed it would have been, for the man was one of those many in the service of the King, but in the pay of his enemies—decided him to be silent in

the hope that after all, the trooper might think himself mistaken.

It proved so; for after again calling to the supposed intruder, but in a more uncertain tone than before, the fellow exclaimed to himself,—"Oh, d—n it, it's nothing after all;" and bringing his piece to its rest again, he resumed his brief promenade. The light and ready ear of Daubigny told him as the man moved, and at the first step he took backwards, he strode with noiseless and long creeping strides from the place, till being beyond the range of all the sentries, he again resumed his erect position, and made for the cottage.

With some little difficulty, he found the warren opening between the tall edges, and with more made his way along the confined and stony path. A thin strip of light, which looked in the darkness like the bright rod of some fairy magician, as it streamed through an unknown chink in the small window, shutter sufficed to guide him to the

door of the humble dwelling of the Rector. The moment, however, his foot was heard on the stone before it, it disappeared. Satisfied, however, by this indication, that the good man was at home; he applied the key with which he had been furnished, and entered.

"You prelatical malignants," said Daubigny, laughing, as he crossed the threshold, "should remember that all the light is with the godly men on the other side, and either mend your shutters, or put out the candle."

"Ah, it is you, Trenton, my boy,' returned the Rector, "then Heaven be praised."

"Amen!" responded his excellent matron, as, with a deep drawn sigh, which told the depth of her previous apprehensions, she saluted the young soldier, and then attempted to re-light the tapers that had been so hastily extinguished.

"Come," said Daubigny, smiling, "I perceive the army are the grand en-

lighteners of the nations in these days,' and taking the candle from the trembling fingers of good Mistress Endsleigh, and who, he perceived, was unable, through her agitation, to light it, he moved the red turf with the heel of his boot, and it again threw its luminence over the humble apartment.

"To what, my dear boy, are we indebted for the pleasure of this visit?" the Rector enquired, after, on Daubigny's suggestion, the covering had been placed over the tell-tale chink, which had pointed out the place to him in the dark.

In reply to the enquiry, Daubigny informed him of the Colonel's commission for London, and taking a bundle, which he had thrown down on his entrance, displayed the full suit of a sober Roundhead.

"Thou will not put on the principles with the garb, I trust, my Trenton,' said the pastor.

"I hope not, my excellent friend," Daubigny answered, "but I fear I must be

hypocrite enough for awhile to put on the semblance of their practice."

"Would that their practice were equal to their professions, for then should we have that heart-felt allegiance to our God which would bring with it the purity and high-mindedness, of which we now hear so much talk. But this cannot be."

"Cannot! Why should it not?" Trenton replied. "Firmly as I am attached to the cause of our honoured Sovereign, I cannot but allow that there is much in the characters and principles of our opponents to esteem and imitate. That they possess an ardent attachment to liberty, cannot be questioned, for they exhibit it in the sacrifices which they continually make, and the existence of the Star Chamber Court had, at least, given them, and the country much cause to complain. There is a force, too, and vitality about their piety, which entitles them, on that ground, to our respect, and it is coupled with a disinterestedness which

sometimes obliges me to feel that I have the wrong cause in hand.

"Doubtless, there are some among them," the Rector replied, "who are true to the commission with which they have been honoured from the Most High, and among them, those faithful men of God, good Richard Baxter and Owen, exhibit the simplicity of their faith in the beauty of their lives, and they act upon the impulse of their internal spirit for good. There are others, also, who, unable themselves to discriminate rightly, and yet anxious to fulfil all righteousness, have taken up the cause, under the impression that it is the right one, and blindly follow the direction of their leaders, not knowing the evil they occasion. Much reason have they, indeed, to sorrow for the exercise of that high hand of power which would seem to have been necessary to stem the torrent of insubordination which was raised by apostate Rome, and which, unhappily, was not laid down soon enough, as it ought to have been, after

it had served its purpose. Our Englishmen are bold and forward spirits, and the arch enemy of our creed, with a subtilty which marks his diabolical origin, infused a spirit of rebellion among our ranks, and called it the spirit of liberty. Why, if such it be, can we trace all these machinations to one source. Why was the humility of the Christian crest erected till it gleamed and glistened, and upreared like the frontlet of the serpent's head exciting repression, and then making that very repression of its licentiousnes a plea to oppose the rule, and question the prerogative of him whom God had set over us? Playing upon the feelings of a man whose kindness was proverbial, and whose piety was undoubted, till they roused him to acts which were ill-advised and injustifiable, though they were as unjustifiably opposed. Opposed, too, by a set of men who were doing all things under the plea of liberty, while they themselves were making unexampled encroach-

ments upon the rights and prerogatives of every other branch of the constitution."

"Yes, my good friend," interrupted Trenton; "but their piety and disinterestedness, at least, were sound."

"In what did their disinterestedness consist? They threw away worldly goods to serve a political cause, and they have cast the country into confusion, bloodshed, and anarchy to promote the private views of a party. Have they increased the means of enlarging God's kingdom in the land. No! for they have laboured to cast His church down to the ground, until he that goeth by plucketh off her grapes, and the wild boar of the wood doth devour it. Test all their principles and their actions by the words of Him who spake as never man spake, and you will find them perverted and unjust. They eschew all government, and, like the first of the fallen angels, the prince of the powers of the air, their pride is

alike indomitable and dangerous. It hath unseated their sovereign—it will divide and, perhaps, destroy themselves.

"Yet will our gracious God in his own good time bring all things right, and we each shall dwell under our own vine and figtree in peace and health. The presence of such men as Richard Baxter among them is a surety, that they shall not be left to go utterly wrong, and go off as did Israel, when she parted from Judah, go off until her own idolatry become her ruin. God in his own good time will bind up our wounds, and close the rent in the fabric of our state, till, at last, the house, again united within itself, shall stand holy before the Lord, and this country be a chosen land to carry out the truths of Christ to the utmost limit of the world.

"But also, who shall live when these things be? In the meantime, let us endeavour to show ourselves good soldiers of the Cross and use the sword of the spirit with charity

and love. I will commend thee to my good friend Baxter, through whose instrumentality my own Herbert hath been so long preserved.

## CHAPTER III.

"What changes time hath,
Time alone can show;
The changes of life's path
Are a river's fitful flow."

COLONEL DORNFORD was not moving without reason; and he had matters of no small difficulty to arrange. By the dispatch just received, and from the messenger who conveyed it, he learned that not only had the party under Sir Hugh Palser been intercepted and to a man captured, but that his own communication with the main body of the king's army had been cut off.

By inquiring of the messenger he heard

that, on Heseltine's entering the hostel after his jocular interview with the host's daughter, he had found the landlord himself, and two or three other individuals, in not very loyal conversation with some of his own men. The troopers were much better swordsmen than casuists, and quite unable to make any successful stand against the arguments with which their opponents plied them.

The most subtle of the disputants was a man with the appearance and pack of a pedlar. His age might be some forty or five and forty years; and there was about him all the cunning and acuteness of his craft. But it seemed that this look was rather assumed than natural; for, as the debate warmed, there would occasionally curl upon his features an indication of scorn at the arguments or the persons he opposed. And, when silent, there would, at intervals, expand upon his countenance a broad and almost startling intelligence of a far higher

order than any likely to be required or possessed by one of his calling.

His face was oval, dark and without a particle of colour; and but for the sparkling black eye by which it was illumined, that betokened thought, the appearance of which nothing could subdue, might, to a casual observer, have appeared little worth notice. The delicacy of his hands too, intimated anything but constant exposure to wind and weather.

He did not often interfere in the conversation, but left that to be carried on chiefly by a tall and gawky person, some ten years his senior, who, with the gloomy acerbity which distinguished the Puritans of the day, had acquired much of the rude, but effective, eloquence, they often displayed. Nor was the influence of it lessened by the drawling and nasal tones in which it was uttered. There was a something so analagous between the depressing intonation and the abjuration of everything that was enlivening and noble in life. He re-

joiced in the title of Righteous Backbone, and enforced his claim to such an appellation —almost blasphemous, and certainly, in the extreme presumptuous—by an earnestness and sincere belief in all he professed, which rendered even such an error respectable.

The other party to the colloquy was Simon Oliver himself, the keeper of the hostel. Simon had, in days gone by, been distinguished for his activity and interest in the sports of the place. None could throw a quoit more truly, or pitch a bar farther than Simon Oliver; and, in those days when embarrassed by factious demagogues under the pretence of a zeal for religion, the people were suffered to follow their own pursuits, happy in their disregared of affairs beyond their ken, Simon had held the reputation of a hearty fellow, and a good, though never intemperate, companion. It was a question whether even Jem Heseltine was his match at football; and he was looked

upon as always a most desirable associate in a country match.

Simon had married one of the prettiest girls of Burford, and when he found it necessary to make the provision for a family, he had been universally encouraged to take the best hostel of the town, as all the country would be assured of a good dinner on market day, and a cheerful companion all the week round.

Mine host at length, became well to do in the world, and the readiness of his laugh and the sallies of his repartees, had made his parlour ring again whenever he made one of the circle of his own guests. But Simon had seen his ricks grow and his barns enlarge. He had added field to field, and house to house, and it began to be remarked that the pretty little girl who ran slipshod about the Chaveley Arms, would soon be one of the best matches in Burford.

Simon's happiness did not increase with his wealth. With more than sufficiency

came avarice and pride. He grew saturnine and eager after that which he could never enjoy. The jocund laugh which had set the table in a roar subsided, and the mirth which had enlightened his hearth gradually left him. The change came like a continual chill on the heart of poor Mary Oliver. She drooped and soon fell a victim to a bruised spirit.

For a while, Simon found consolation in his child; but, as she grew up to womanhood his care for her decreased, and his desire for wealth grew; he was readily open to any temptation that would increase his store. There were emissaries about quite ready and able to take advantage of such a character. His house was a convenient central point, and an admirable focus from which sedition might be sown. The pay was good. He became a willing husbandman; and his natural ability and quiet readiness soon rendered him a powerful, as well as useful, member of the confederacy who, whether for right or for wrong, were

banded together for a purpose, the best of them conceived to be most holy.

Such were the parties engaged in conference with some of the troopers and non-commissioned officers of Heseltine's own troop when that veritable person entered the general room of the Chaveley arms.

If there was one thing Heseltine detested more than another, it was what he called hypocrism. He could not help observing that Master Oliver had become not a little sanctimonious in his deportment and pretensions. Had this been the result of real feeling, none would have admired it more than Jem Heseltine. But when he thought that appearance constituted the whole depth of piety or loyalty, his anger was apt to rise.

In the course of an hour's conversation, his loyalty had been so entrapped, that an uproar had ensued. He soon found himself engaged in personal conflict with the chief of the three speakers. The few troopers who had not retired, were unable to contend

with the band of adherents which, from somewhere, came immediately to the rescue of the host and his friends, and who were far too much for the royalists. Heseltine had been thrown down, and Righteous Backbone was standing over him, ready to plunge his sword, with a fatal stroke, when Susan, who had roused the guard, rushed to his rescue.

The rescuers were the more numerous party when, as they were securing their prisoners, the military police of Burford, headed by Oliver himself, entered the room. A fresh struggle ensued, and as the contest came to an end, they were bound together to be handed to the common prison. Sir Hugh Palser had been roused by the tumult, and a messenger from the guard soon appeared to appease it. Seeing, however, the presence of the recognised authority, he was about to leave them in charge, when suddenly a door was opened near the fire-place behind the Puritans, and, in a moment, they had effected their

escape. Susan had seized upon the tall pedlar, for she had observed him take a musty roll from the breast of Heseltine; but he had flung her from him, and she fell stunned, and nearly senseless on the hearth, where she was slowly recovered by the care of the affectionate trooper. Sir Hugh had, in vain, dispersed his troops in search of the prisoners. The search was useless, and they gradually re-assembled, after a fatiguing duty.

## CHAPTER IV.

"Woman's wit!—
'Tis pleasing always,
And not often at fault."

"Thou art right, good Hugh."

OLD PLAY.

SUDDEN as had been the disappearance of Heseltine's antagonist from the hands of the *posse comitatus* of Burford, and surprising as had been the agility with which his unwieldly bulk had eluded the grasp of justice, he had not escaped entirely unscathed; for, alarmed and bruised as she was by the violence with which Righteous Backbone had thrown her from him, Susan, unconsciously, retained a portion of his vest, which had come away with her hold,

and, on reaching her room, with natural curiosity, she examined its contents. These were sufficient, even upon a hasty perusal of a portion, to confirm all the suspicion which had been excited by the few wo ds she had overheard between her father and the superior of the two strangers.

Hurried and anxious, she laid the paper on her dressing-table, uncertain how to act, and dubious of the propriety of meddling at all in the affair. The purpose of the paper, of which she had thus unwillingly become possessed, was such, that she felt herself an accessary in the guilt of the deception which it disclosed, if she remained silent; and yet she could scarcely believe that the document was valid, or the tenor of it such as it appeared to the natural understanding of an unlettered person.

Some of it was in a language with which she was unacquainted, and in every part there were allusions that she could not comprehend, but upon the very face of it there was enough to disclose that it was

one of a series of very important papers; and, indeed, though she knew it not, a chief link in the chain. It contained denunciations of so dreadful a character that she conceived none but a fiend could either have imagined, or have uttered them, while there were also directions for movements of the utmost interest and on the most extensive scale.

On opening the folds, as she proceeded in the perusal, she found a paper, purporting to be a commission for some high deeds to certain functionaries of both armies, evincing a variety of combination, and a singularity and strangeness of collusion, which quite surpassed the bounds of the poor girl's comprehension. She felt that she was in the possession of an important secret, and trembled not only at the result that might arise from its promulgation, but also at the risk she incurred by having become acquainted with it.

Susan's was no mind to sink into useless and helpless despondency, for not only had

she natural powers beyond the usual average of her grade, but she had been particularly favoured by the personal instructions of the pastor of the neighbouring village of Cheddington, whose good will she had obtained by the artless performance of much kindness that had come under his notice. The good man's object, in her instruction, had been to imbue his pupil with principles rather than knowledge, and to draw out and direct feelings rather than to develope and strengthen talent. He knew the station which his *protegée* was called upon to fill. He was more desirous that she should meet with happiness than obtain distinction, and he had, therefore, looked upon the heart rather than the head.

It is true, that in her ministration of his errands of love, she had learned to exercise discretion, and to discriminate character as well as to relieve affliction; and while, by observation of the variety of ills to which flesh is heir, she had suffered her feelings to take their flow of boundless af-

fection towards the sufferers, she had, at the same time acquired the power of restraining their exhibition as well as their amount. Nor could she do otherwise than enjoy much mental cultivation in the indirect tuition of a man, from whose lips wisdom flowed like honey; so that while the object of his lessons was to fit her better for the fulfilment of her humble station, they brought, also, increased force and extent to her intellectual faculties.

She herself did not indeed know how much she was, in many respects, above those around her, for she had none of that shallow vanity which, arising from the consciousness of superior powers, induces the subject of it to dwell within a region of his own, and creates a gloom out of self-sufficiency. The right sphere of woman is always subordinate. Grace, beauty, and loveliness shed their halo of purity and gentleness around her path. She always exhibits, when directed aright, more than any other, the transcendental attribute of

her God in her daily walk, and she finds, indeed, in the fulness and variety of her influence, that "love constraineth her."

But it constrains by an unseen charm, and the less the spell is perceived the more its witchery is felt. Susan Oliver thought nothing of all this; but it appertained none the less to her for all that—nay, perhaps, the more for that very reason. She exhibited no affectation, and she made no pretension. She went on in her joyous, simple course beloved, respected and esteemed by all who knew her. The gloom of her father had no effect upon her character; for she laughed with the gay, she smiled with the placid, and grieved with the oppressed.

That silent working of genuine goodness which, like the moisture of the bounteous earth, is neither seen nor heard, but which is known so fully and largely in its blessed effects, of the plenty and beauty of which the blind is clothed, followed on Susan's way through life. Many a one, who had been

blessed by her instrumentality, knew not of the cause of their enjoyment; but all loved her, and all who came near to her agreed with Susan Oliver. And this in return had its effect upon her. It strengthened her though she knew not her strength. It built up her soul in power, as it had been previously fortified by purity, and gave her an internal though latent energy of which she herself was not conscious. She only *felt* what was right; without hesitation she was ready to perform it.

On the present occasion, however, she was grasping an object beyond the reach of her untrained powers, and it filled her with alarm. She did not fear for her personal safety, or apprehend that any evil could arise to her happiness; but there was, in the very importance of the matter, something weighty and overwhelming to her spirits.

The continual interest which the civil war excited, especially in that neighbourhood, had made all more or less acquainted

with the principles and causes out of which it arose, and if ever there was a time in the history of the country when the force of the national character was displayed in its masculine strength it was most at the period when the body of the people, casting off the lethargy with regard to public events, which absorption in their private pursuits occasioned, turned to investigate the dissensions between the two great parties in the State. But Susan had acquired the strength without, as yet, the information for effecting the general benefit of her neighbourhood; for her ideas ranged not far from her home, and she felt the need of a guide. She would have consulted Heseltine if she could have obtained access to him. She could not assume courage at the moment to address Sir Hugh Palser, and of the other officers of the detachment she knew nothing.

As the name of Heseltine occurred to the mind, or rather, perhaps, it should be said, her heart, the remembrance of all

her days of bygone happiness rose vividly to her recollection; when upon the village green, or wandering through the neighbouring fields, and by the streams of her native town, she had enjoyed those unsophisticated pleasures, and those happy affections which increasing years, and still more the present conflict had so cruelly interrupted. Her heart and spirit were away in the remote years of youth and childhood, when the envelope of the dreadful document caught her eye, and resting with her elbows on the little oaken drawers which served her as a toilet-table, a hand raised to each side of her head while her hair fell profusely over her face and on her shoulders, she attempted, with a collected mind, once more to scan its contents. In the inability to reach Heseltine the thought struck her, should she speak to her father. That at least was not too late. It might be safe, but there was a something about Simon Oliver that even his own daughter, good and excellent as she was, could not break through. A dark,

repulsive coolness shed an atmosphere of mystery and suspicion around him which excluded aught of confidence or of love; and of late, he had seemed, even still more than usual, enveloped in the abstractions of his own views and feelings. She felt she could not leave the master to him, and yet why should she not. She would, and was gathering up her hair to meet him on his return from the mayor's, but at that moment there was a rattle at the front door, she heard his tread echo in the passage; the locks and bolts grated harshly through the house, and a sudden tremor seized her.

Well did she know the displeasure she would experience if he knew of her being still up, and the daughter overcame the woman. She with difficulty and in haste, extinguished the taper which, with its lengthened rush, had almost burnt itself out, and threw herself upon her bed.

It was not to sleep, for her prayers brought not their usual quietude. Her

mind was agitated with that vagueness of alarm which is ten times more appalling than actual danger. The darkness seemed rather to have increased than dissolved her apprehensions. A multitude of indistinct, but all terrifying, images, surrounded and pressed upon her in quick succession. Her nerves were strung to a fearful state of tension, and all her senses became most painfully acute.

She lay and listened. She thought she heard movements in the house ; the rustling as of the garments of one passing silently by a wainscot or through a passage, and a stealthy tread as if gliding down the stairs in secret. She was convinced she heard some one moving, and thought she perceived the distant whispering of a human voice. Again the wind and the pattering of the rain drops against her casement—for the night had become fitful and gusty—drowned all other sounds. Once the wind sighed away to rest ; and

after a moment's pause, she heard the renewal of the whisperings. Again she listened, and was convinced that there were persons moving about the house.

She could lay still no longer. An uncontrollable feeling of alarm prompted her to rise. Quickly, but with the utmost quietness, she gathered her things and bound them tight about her. Slowly she trod her chamber floor, and listened at the door. She thought she knew her father's voice, but the words he uttered were spoken in so low a tone that they could not be recognized even by his child. Hesitation was now impossible. Curiosity, fear, and a mixture of every stirring impulse, drove her on. Safely securing the dreaded document in her bosom, where she had thrust it, she peered through the darkness around her; and then, one by one, with a lighter foot than those even who had preceded her, she descended the antique staircase. Once, and once only, the wood creaked loudly; but she stopped till the little alarm which the noise had created

had subsided, and the conversation of those below was resumed, apparently with greater earnestness than ever.

Susan gradually and silently approached the scene of this strange conference; and, at length, obtained such a position as enabled her both to see and hear all that passed.

Seated opposite to each other, at a small round table of the common sitting room of the inn, were her father and the younger of the two pedlars. A small lamp, with a low wick, standing between them, threw a faint and sickly luminance upon their countenances, but was unable to dissipate the surrounding gloom; and a deep obscurity shrouded every object, save where the protuberance of a beam, or the projection of the lofty-headed fire-place was brought out by the insufficient light. The flame flickered in the slight eddies of the night wind, which found entrance through the rude workmanship of the old house; and, as the glare played upon the countenances of those engaged in

this mysterious meeting, it gave to their appearances a peculiarly dark and sinister aspect.

They had been sitting thus in silence for some minutes; during which, as they, either of them, began to speak, he was admonished, and requested to listen by the significant gesture of his companion. The stillness was, however, uninterrupted; except, when the footfall of the sentry without was occasionally heard; but the sound even of that, was so indistinct and uncertain, that it seemed rather to add to, than disturb the quietude that reigned with a solemn and debasing influence in the place.

The face of her father was hidden from Susan by his position; but, by his frequently leaning across the table—the contraction of his shoulders, and the almost spasmodic effort with which he seemed to address the stranger, she concluded that there was something of importance being debated between them. This was fully confirmed by an observation of his com-

panion, whose features were open to her inspection. He was less disturbed in his deportment, but still there was a working of deep and violent passion vividly expressed; and though he seemed to hold the counsels of his companion lightly, and there was, from time to time, the curl of derision around his handsome mouth, she seemed to conceive that he had not exhibited any such feeling. There was a deference, or rather consideration, for the manner which was not extended to the matter of what he heard; and an indifferent or superficial observer would have said that there was something of fear in his deportment.

Nothing could have been more groundless. Few men had ever been more constitutionally free from such a weakness. Indeed, his boundless and continual intrepidity, often led the companion of Simon Oliver into positions which his judgment condemned; and though, now surrounded by danger, it was not the apprehension of

it, but caution to avoid its consequences by which he was actuated. Conflicting emotions now conspired to destroy his equanimity; and, as Susan contemplated the remarkable regularity and gracefulness of his features, she shuddered at the diabolical intelligence and malignity of their expression.

One of weaker nerves or of lower principle would have been overcome by the intensity of her feelings, but the heart of Susan was naturally a brave one, and her interest had become so absorbed, that fear for herself was forgotten. The danger to which Hesseltine, whom she loved with an ardour which she was very unwilling to confess to herself, much less to him, and the various apprehensions that gathered round her heart, when she saw her father engaged in this midnight converse, urged her to go forward in the path she had almost unwittingly begun to tread. Had she desired to draw back, escape without discovery was now impossible, and she

watched the further progress of the scene before her with increasing attention.

The conversation declined, and shortly afterwards both were silent for some minutes. At length, the stranger's patience appeared to be exhausted, and he repeatedly consulted a costly watch of elegant workmanship, and remarked, as if continuing their former conversation, but upon a different topic.

"It seemeth unto me, Master Oliver, that you have chosen but an indifferent place for this conference. The open room of an inn, with a number of Charles's soldiers about, is not the best place to tell secrets in."

"On ordinary occasions, it may not be so, Master Derivale," said Master Oliver; "but when all is over, and the darkness is around you, there is no spot so private as your public place."

"That may be, Signor Oliver; but I question whether Sir Edward Martell will be able to enjoy its privacy, or take advantage of your sop counsels."

"No doubt of it, sir, my lord," returned Oliver, with a mixture of effrontery and respect which he knew how to combine so as to prevent either from being offensive. If Sir Edward should not be permitted to come to this room, under the permission of his guard, I have got such a sentry placed at his door, as will assuredly permit him to come without leave of his officer."

"Is your man to be depended upon?"

"I am satisfied with him, and shall expect to see him march off with the party when the surprise is effected."

"Where are the troops?"

"At the end of the town—by the church?"

"Well armed?"

"Completely equipped, my lord."

"By whom are they led?"

"By young Ellerton of Grange Place."

"What he of the Wine Cup?"

"The same, my lord."

"He will do."

Oliver had by this time lost all the boldness with which till the opening of the con-

versation, he had behaved towards his companion; and as the latter rose from the chair he occupied, and strode across the apartment, the innkeeper assumed the respect that should mark their respective ranks; but there was a scowl on his countenance as he did so.

Had not the peculiar intelligence and delicacy of his countenance convinced Susan that it was no ordinary person she was looking upon, or had the terms in which her father addressed him, failed to intimate so much, the fact would have been immediately impressed upon her by the style and gracefulness of his carriage. She was interrupted in her observation by a slight rustle at the side-door of the room. Her father and his guest looked instantly round, the rapier of the one flashed from its scabbard, and was ready to be placed upon the defensive, as it gleamed darkly in the dim light of the flame, and a pistol of small dimensions for the period, and of beautiful workmanship was held ready

cocked in the hand of the other, when Sir Edward himself stood before them. A gloomy smile, the nearest approach to jocularity he was ever known to indulge in, passed across his countenance, as he observed the precautions which Master Derivale and his host had taken.

"Ye greet me with a sorry welcome methinks, my masters," said the Baronet, as he entered and took his seat.

"A ready one you will grant, Sir Edward," Oliver replied, as he returned the pistol to his belt.

"Nor the less sincere for its readiness, signor," added Derivale, who spoke English with fluency, though with a strong foreign accent, but the words were uttered with that peculiar *suavi* which indicated the highest polish of manner. Sir Edward received the compliment which the words did not convey, and assuming a seat at their counsel board, replied,

"Your services, Master Derivale, have shown you to be a friend, and never more

so than where I am myself at this moment enjoying the solid advantages of them, and in the success of the great and good cause, you will be assuredly rewarded for them."

"My services are poor, Sir Edward, but my zeal is hearty."

"Services may be of a twofold kind, and if, as is rumoured, you help to break the strength of the enemy within the camp, as well as by leaguing with the righteous without, we are beholden to you for a twofold benefit."

"I would not overvalue my poor assistance, Sir Edward, but we sometimes hold that to break the strength of an enemy in the camp, is sometimes better than to defeat him in the field."

"Aye, truly do ye speak, Master Derivale, but I hold, and always shall hold, that right in the end becomes might, and I must say that I have little stomach for using Satan to cheat Beelzebub."

"Yet the gracious Lord Fairfax and others have felt it a good means to come at

the heart of your opponents. I am but striving to upset that monster of iniquity your Established Church, and so set free the consciences of all the true servants of grace."

"They may be right means Master Derivale," returned the Baronet, "but I can scarcely call them good. But however that may be, Fairfax must settle it with his own conscience. Let the honour be his, the benefit ours. The monster of which thou speakest has filled the land with his whoredoms. The love of the things of this world has destroyed the church, and the righteous now must clamour for the truth. But, first of all, how stand our dispositions here."

"They are all right we may say with thankfulness, please you, Sir Edward," answered Simon.

"What meanest thou by right, knave, for I can scarcely call any thing right that thou hast to do with. The reward, I fancy, has more to do with thy desire than the

doings of the things because they are right."

"Truly, truly, Sir Edward, sir," answered Oliver, whose nature was of a deeper and higher character far than his confederates supposed, and who felt the sting of the insult, but concealed the wound. "Truly, Sir Edward, and I do hope," he continued, chuckling, half to himself, as if he already grasped the gold that was to be the reward of his perfidy. "I do hope that you will not forget the small lucre of gain that was to reward my poor services. The alterations have been made which shall make the surprise succeed."

"Good, friend Oliver," returned the Baronet. "In the day of reward thou shall not be forgotten."

Master Oliver indulged in a scowl at the Baronet, which had it been observed would have speedily terminated the negotiation with the double hypocrite. It was noticed by their companion, who, compre-

hending all occasions and circumstances, fixed upon him a look which convinced Master Oliver that the full depth of his malignancy had been observed, and from that moment he hated the man whom he began to fear. But he held his peace, and Sir Edward began further inquiries respecting the arrangements which had been made for the rescue of his own party, and the progress of the cause which he had espoused.

"The woman, Henrietta, hath, I understand, left the country," said Sir Edward, turning to Derivale, what is her likelihood of success."

"She will obtain some assistance," Derivale replied, for though the monarchs abroad dislike her husband they like the cause of a king, and for that reason will render her something. But I believe that the Pope, by whom most of the others are directed, doth set himself against her, and so she will succeed only to some small extent even with her brother of France."

"Strange! antichrist and evil against each other. Beshrew thee, I do believe that thou knowest more of the Pope's thoughts than many another that pretends more knowledge."

Derivale was neither desirous to strengthen or do away with this impression, and he therefore made no reply to the observation. But starting upon another subject, he said, "we are prepared, Sir Edward, for to-night, and good Master Oliver hath all things ready for the explosion, when will it please you that it be performed—Immediately."

"Explosion! never, sir?" exclaimed Sir Edward, breaking through his conventional manner in an honest indignation at the plan which had been concocted for his deliverance, and that of his men. "Sooner would I remain a prisoner for ever."

"And the cause be ruined," added Derivale, with a sneer which he could not repress.

"The cause !" said Sir Edward, "I tell thee, friend, that no cause can justify murder."

"The war is—" interrupted Oliver; but the colloquy was broken short, by a bursting explosion as of the loudest thunder, the house trembled to its foundations, a sudden lurid light gleamed through every crevice, and filled the air. The three stood astounded. The mine which Oliver had prepared for the destruction of the royalists had exploded prematurely. Its suddenness startled Susan with afright, and forgetful of everything, she screamed with terror. A ball from the pistol of her father whistled past her in the back room where she was stationed, and she rushed from the door. The noise convinced the party that they had been overheard. Oliver darted into the room, and his dagger was intangled as he pushed it home, when he drew it from the door-post into which it had deeply entered, the fugitive was gone, but the rem-

nant on its point was a portion of his daughter's dress. From that moment, confidence between the father and daughter was at an end; the sweetest relation of life had been destroyed by the passions of a civil war.

The explosion had been the agreed signal with the parliamentary troopers. Though it was premature they were ready. Ellerton and his party dashed at a gallop down the High Street of Burford; and, in less than half an hour, after an unavailing, though brave, resistance, Sir Palser and his followers were in the custody of their late prisoners. Such is the fortune of life!

Susan had, with extreme difficulty, escaped the murderous attack of her father, but her spirit was undaunted, soon as her alarm had subsided—for she believed she was serving the cause of truth and innocence. She lost, therefore, no time in seeking out a trusty messenger, to whose keep-

ing she confided the precious document she had recovered, together with a brief detail of the circumstances of the last few hours. Such was the despatch Colonel Dornford had received; and on the contents of which he proceeded to act.

## CHAPTER VI.

With characteristic energy, the Colonel determined to proceed upon the information, which had reached him, and pacing the apartments which overlooked the private gardens, he, for a while, sought, in vain, for any indication of the visitors whom he had expected to meet. But, on turning round the ante-room which led into the garden, a slight rustle fell upon his ear; and in endeavouring to ascertain from

whence it came, his foot struck against the staircase that led up to the long gallery.

This was an apartment which he had entirely overlooked; for having formerly been merely a retreat from the battlements, but little use had been made of it during his own occupation, and that of his immediate ancestors, although it was fitted up as a place of recreation in the way described. The little incident, however, brought it to his recollection, and rushing up the steps, he entered the room.

It was too dark to distinguish a single object, so he stood still in expectation of hearing or seeing something that should indicate the presence of occupants, and the object of their being there. Nor was he held long in suspense, for he had not remained more than a few minutes in observation ere, from a small aperture on his left, a lady entered, clad in a dress of spotless white, and followed by a damsel who held her train. Behind her, at a little

distance, followed two men in ecclesiastical habits; the whole preceded by a servant of his own establishment, also clothed in what he conceived to be a monastic garb, and who carried a large wax taper in each hand. A solemn silence pervaded the group as it proceeded slowly towards the upper end of the room, where the attendant, placing the lights upon a small altar, upon which there was an exquisitely carved crucifix, retired to a short distance to the right, as the female who bore the train of her mistress did to the left. The lady advanced, and knelt on the lowest step of the altar, while the priests, for such they evidently were, took their places on either side.

The lady too quickly had gone by Colonel Dornford to enable him to catch a sight of her features, and being partially hid by the buttress, and partly concealed by the shade, he remained concealed until the party had passed. But his heart told him that it was his long lost Edith, and

with noiseless strides, he followed in the steps of those before him.

As she rose from her devotions, Colonel Dornford recognised in the countenance of the fair girl before him the features of his own dear child, but her air was sorrowful and her cheeks were pale. In a moment he would have clasped her to his breast, but an uncontrollable interest in the scene, about to take place, rooted him to the spot, and restraining his impulse, with intense anxiety, he watched the proceedings of the party. He had not long to remain in ignorance of the object of the ceremony.

The elder of the two priests, in whose countenance he thought he recognised a face that had been long familiar to him, first took up the chaunt of a hymn—the words of which the Colonel could not distinguish—but in so low a tone that it could not fairly be heard beyond the confines of the apartment, yet so clear, so rich and full was it in the deep mellow tones of the manly voice by which it was chaunted that it filled the

ear with the completeness of its harmony. When the first strain was finished the other priest took up a corresponding air, and then all united in a commingled unison. Divinest harmony swelled into the fulness of its melody, as the spirit responded to the sentiment it expressed, until one full gush of soul-exciting fervour evinced the height of its enchanting power over the heart and mind. Again it sunk, and rose, and sunk again, till, dying in a strain of exquisite sweetness silence seemed to break the spell, which those strains had thrown over the hearts of those who raised them.

How true is it that the spirit acknowledges those unseen agencies which actuate us with such urgent impulses, and show us by the very power they exercise, not only the being of a world of invisible thoughts, but the closeness also of our connection with the existences that fill it. Bound in the fetters of a restricted belief by the continual aspect of material substances, by which, and with which, our corporeal nature

seems to continue, we lose sight of those unseen workings, of which the springing of a plant, or the motion of a cloud, as it is driven before the viewless winds, might remind us. But when some far off strain, some long remembered note strikes upon the ear, awakening by its gentle music a crowd of associations which live, and find their answer only in the soul: our faith of life takes a wider range. When to this is added the force of a religious observance, in which we acknowledge the glory, or praise the goodness of the Great Omnipotence; how does the whole being bow to the principle of His presence, subscribe to the truth of His unseen manifestation, and acknowledge its faith in the reality, and the vital energy of that world of spirits, of which our God is the Almighty head, and of which we ourselves are at the instant members and spectators by antepast.

It is then that we lose sight of the world, and its cares; then, that forgetting the greater portion of our necessities, the heart

is refined to a faint resemblance of that state of etherial existence, in which the body, purified and elevated from its earthliness and mortality, shall become the merest attendant on the will of the mind, and the ready slave of its behests—when the passions, instead of being the consuming fires that are continually bursting the barriers of their prison-house, and destroying that which was good, or converting the good into evil, shall be an everlasting phœnix in the heart—a sacred flame to warm, to animate, and to enliven the whole being—to kindle the affections into more earnest and various development of love—and to prompt the intellect in its never ceasing progress of assimilitude to that Almighty mind that made the world.

At such times, the inner man seems to catch a perception of the loftiness of its destiny, and awakening—though unconsciously it may be—to a sense of its natural dignity, throws off the tattered and sullied attire of mind, motive, and imperfect

wants, which its necessities have thrown over the nakedness of its native probity and truth, and seems even to fly from, for a time, the load of its hereditary and indwelling corruption, and to act almost without let, or hindrance on the principles of rectitude and simplicity, which it had before death and all our woe came by sin. What is right, is alone considered; what is expedient, is forgotten or disregarded. The future is a nought; the present is everything, because in the present alone can duty be performed, or affection be satisfied. The love that looks for a future position, takes prudence for the guide of its conduct, and in nothing have the wisdom and the goodness of the Great Provider for our welfare ever been shown more than in so intermingling prudence and principle in the scheme planned for our eternal welfare, than by evincing that the prize of high calling can only be obtained by a manifestation of all the noble qualities of our combined nature.

But in the prudence, which has a reference solely to earthly benefit, how often is the principle of simpleness of heart overlooked, and how often is purity of motive altogether set aside!

With man, however, thus favourably raised above his depression and depravity, one affection only fills the heart, and one thought the mind, and the first impulse that arises, is almost invariably the right one.

Colonel Dornford knew not, or perceived not, aught of this, but the process had passed through his heart, and had vivified while it purified his affection. The hymn had subsided, and with it the spell was broken that had bound him, incontinently, to the feelings which it had excited; but he was still held by an intense interest in the scene before him, and as he saw that dear and beautiful creature again kneel at the altar, he bent his head in reverence to the great God to the footstool of whose throne she had come. He felt induced to speak, but he restrained himself.

How great a trouble and affliction could he have saved to himself, and his beloved child had he, on the instant, listened to that voice of his heart.

The night wind, which wandered with an occasional moan through the huge apartment, or found its way through the crevices of the windows, blew upon the flames of the tapers, and caused them to give a flickering and uncertain light, which, as it varied with every passing breath, threw the figures of those engaged in the religious service into a partial but ever changing relief, while it kept the form of the Colonel, at the little distance at which he stood, in such a degree of shadow as to screen him from observation; so far indeed, as to make him appear to one, unconscious of his presence, as a portion of the room, or of the furniture that stood around, while the obscurity, entirely hid the play of passions on his manly countenance, and prevented those twitchings of the limbs from being perceived, which, more than the working of his features, in-

dicated the strength and variety of the feelings by which he was animated.

From the same cause the Colonel was prevented from narrowly scrutinizing the countenances of those engaged in this secret ceremony, to him not long destined to be a mystery; for the elder of the priests advancing to the altar threw back the cape of his cloak, and disclosed to the eyes of the astonished spectator, the countenance of Mr. Vavasour; whom he immediately recognised, notwithstanding the alteration effected by his head being closely shaven, except in a narrow stripe of hair that surrounded the crown. Of the individual he could have no doubt, for, advancing to the altar, with the full glare of the tapers upon his face he repeated a brief prayer in the ceremony of the Romish ritual, for the recantation of a heretic. Then taking the two hands of Edith, raised her from the step on which she was kneeling, and placed them in those of the other individual, by whom she

was questioned as to her willingness to enter the bosom of his church.

"I will," Edith replied, and if her distracted father had before entertained any doubt that the beautious and fragile being before him was his own child, changed as she was by time and evident suffering, the voice would immediately have brought the truth home to his heart. But astonishment seemed to have destroyed his faculties, and he could neither move, think, nor speak. To see his own child willingly and voluntarily adhere to a set of principles in the very acknowledgement of which even there was contamination, was beyond his power to conceive, and almost, notwithstanding the evidence of his senses, beyond his power to believe. The terrible fact was however before him, and he could neither misunderstand or discredit it. He was paralysed, and stood with gaping wonder to witness what farther would take place.

The face of Edith was pallid as marble—still and deathlike. Not a muscle moved,

not a trace of hesitation or regret could be perceived. Her full, dark, lustrous eyes alone showed by the intermitted brightness which filled them, and then fled, and then in an instant returned, but to flee again, what were the feelings that filled her heart. Vavasour's voice though low and thinner in its tones than its former rich music used to show, was clear, distinct, and firm. Edith's maid wept with ill suppressed sobs behind her, while the traitor who had helped strangers, by his collusive assistance, to violate the sanctity of his master's household, was moved at the internal distress yet heroic fortitude, of the fair girl who was thus putting an impassable barrier between her heart and those she loved better than all the earth besides.

"You will cleave unto her, and love her, and obey her, and become her willing and faithful child and servant until your life's end," said the priest.

"I will," replied Edith.

"Then by this sign of the cross upon thy brow, I receive thee, Edith Dornford, to

be a lamb of the flock, committed to her charge and to hold thee as her true and faithful denizen—"

But the very extremity of the evil brought back into play those powers of which, from his extreme amazement and grief, he had been deprived, and before the priest could utter the concluding words of his address, the Colonel rushed forward and, clasping the fainting Edith, as she fell with a scream into his arms, exclaimed, while every feature expressed unutterable derision and defiance,—

"Never, never!"

The circle started at this sudden apparition, and an exclamation of surprise burst from the group. Vavasour, for it was indeed he who had thus far consummated the object of his long and urgent labours, turned away his face in momentary confusion and dismay, while the attendants, affrighted at the sudden appearance of their master, stepped a few paces back to the side of the gallery. The priest, who was officiating at

the moment, alone remained unmoved. No occurrence, however unexpected, seemed to have power to disturb the impassability of his firmness, and bringing his hand from the position to which he had raised it to bless the fair proselyte, he laid it upon the altar. A glance of reproach was cast at his brother priest, and uttering the simple word, "Again," he met the gaze of the excited father with a look as fixed and as earnest as his, whose whole soul spoke through every portion of his countenance, while not a flush crossed his brow, nor did even a momentary terror quiver on his lip.

"Never—never! Never shall you claim her as a scion of your mischievous and most destructive heresy," said the Colonel, still holding the poor girl fondly by the waist as, kneeling with one knee upon the floor he kissed her forehead with the utmost fondness; whilst her beautiful hair, breaking from its braiding, covered his hands and swept upon the ground.

"We asked you not," returned the person he addressed, "for your permission, good sir, to retain those whom the church hath received to her arms, nor do we conceive that any conviction of earthly duty should intrude between the allegiance of the soul and its God."

"By what authority you thus presume to interfere between a father and his child, I have yet to learn—or why you thus invade the sanctity of a home to rob a man of the richest treasure he has on this side of Heaven? Of you, sir," he continued, turning to Vavasour, "I would inquire why I thus find one whom I have ever regarded as alike free from dishonesty and prejudice, clad in a garb which indicates so close a connection with a church, that we have so often said was apostate, and why you are thus engaged in bereaving me of my child. Oh, Vavasour—Vavasour! did I not leave this, the choicest gem of all my casket, to your especial care, and re-

turn to find it shorn of the chief of its brilliancy through your aid. Was there no faith—no truth to warn you of the foul wrong you were working against an absent friend."

And the father's heart, wrung almost to breaking, betrayed the strength of its emotion in the sobbing earnestness with which he clasped Edith's form to his breast.

"Think you not, Dornford," Vavasour returned, "that I have well fulfilled the duty which you consigned to me, when I have brought the erring sheep to the fold of the true shepherd. When, dispelling the dreams and phantoms by which she had been misled, I have instructed her aright as to the nature of that treasure which is laid up for her in heavenly places to all eternity. See you not the lines of celestial adoption written in the fair character of her countenance."

"I do, indeed, read them written there, but not in the thoughts or the principles

which you have infused, for they were stamped upon her soul by the great Omnipotent himself. Awake, awake, my sweet one," he continued, fondly embracing the dear girl who still hung in a state of unconsciousness on his arm.

There was, however, no answering sigh, symptom of returning sense, and but for a faint pulsation that was still perceptible, death itself could not haveappeared more inanimate. The Colonel, at length, became seriously alarmed; and, losing all other thoughts in anxiety for the recovery of his child, he removed her to a couch, and stood, with the utmost earnestness, yet with gentleness, chafing the hand he held, whilst Cicely and Vavasour were equally active in their endeavours to restore her to consciousness. A low sob—a convulsive twitching, and then a long drawn sigh gladdened them with the perception that their efforts were not in vain. A slight flush suffused her countenance, and her eyes unclosed with longing affection upon her father, as

he stood gazing with equal fondness upon her; and, opening her lips, now recovering something of their ruby tint, she whisperingly exclaimed,

"My father."

"Here am I my child."

"My father, is it you?"

"It is, indeed, my child—would I had been more of a father than I have been to thee, my sweet Edith."

"Oh! name it not. But why did you not return to me sooner? I have had such a dream—such a horrid dream—but it was but a dream. I thought you had come back to me, and just as we we were about to be so happy, you, Albert, and I, and— But no matter, we were all going to be so happy, when some one came and separated us, I thought for ever. Oh! it was such a horrid dream! I feel almost as if it was real. You will not leave me again, my father."

And she clung round his neck as if she was fearful of again losing her longed-

for treasure, and hid her face upon his breast.

"Leave thee, never my child. Wherever I go thou shalt go. Where I am, there thou shalt be; and if the necessities of the service oblige us to separate, I will leave thee in better keeping than I did before."

"Say not so," Vavasour interrupted. "Thy child has been as my child; and if I have erred in leading her to the truth, let thine own heart judge."

"That—who's that?" said Edith, sharply, clinging to her father s arm. "Who is that man ?"

"It is Master Vavasour—my friend Vavasour," returned the Colonel, putting back her hair from before her eyes.

"Oh, no! I see," said Edith, hastily. "It is Father Hildebrand."

"Father what, my child ?"

"It is Father Hildebrand, who hath taught me all I know, and led me on the way where I again shall see my sainted mo-

ther. Will that not be sweet, my father ?"

"Troth, my child," returned the Colonel. "I trust that will not happen soon to thee, for my sake, nor soon to me for thine. And as for these reverend gentlemen, we may dispense with their company. There are times, good sirs, when a father would be alone with his child. It is now some time since my Edith and I have met ; and I crave your pardon, therefore, if I am somewhat rude in desiring you to be absent for a time. The steward will care for the comforts of my guests.

"We leave not the dove thus in the eagle's nest, fair sir ; and as my friend here, has prepared apartments for his ward, there needs not that we part so soon."

"How, sir! beard you a man within his own house and respecting the child of his own bowels ?"

"There are ties, my friend," interposed Hildebrand, ' which brook not those of the

flesh ; and my friend, who is zealous in his calling, hath come far to bring this sweet spirit to its home."

"Mean you that my child hath become a Papist, and flings from her the ties of kindred, faith, and blood."

"I do mean," returned Vavasour, "that she is now a child of the true church, and owes allegiance to none on earth but her."

"Speak, my Edith! Have these men told me true. Was that a declaration of faith I heard from your lips, but now?"

"It was, my father," Edith replied, now recovering the powers of which her swoon appeared to have almost entirely deprived her.

The answer was more than the broken-hearted father could bear. Traversing the room with hasty strides, he crossed his arms upon his breast and endeavoured to repress the weight of emotion by which it

was swelled, and writhed till the contortions appeared as if they would burst the barrier beneath which his heart was wildly beating. The effort was almost a vain one, and the uncontrollable anguish that heaved within his chest was evident; but the spirit of manly pride, at last prevailed, and suppressing nearly all appearance of the inward strife, he turned to Vavasour, and with the dignity which marked his usual deportment said—

"I know not, Master Vavasour, what change has come over yourself—though, it would seem, that there is a mystery about you which I do not comprehend, and which I have little or no inclination to inquire into, —but I have both the right and the necessity, to ask through what means you have effected any change in the principles of my child?"

The principles which have been used, Master Dornford, have been soberness and reason. She, herself, will tell you that her convictions are clear, and her will steadfast."

"Say, my Edith, say it is not thus. Bless your father's heart with the assurance that this whim or phantasy hath passed away; and that you still retain the simplicity of your ancient faith."

"Alas! alas! I cannot," returned Edith, "You, my dearest father, would not wish me to state my belief in error; and, if I must declare my adhesion, oh! think me not hard, my father, that I cleave to the faith of the saints of old, and cling to the rock of my salvation."

The Colonel's heart felt like lead within him. He knew not how, or where to turn for consolation from this most grievous attack upon his peace. The heavens did seem as brass, and the earth was as iron, under his feet. All his hopes of happiness appeared to have fled; and she that was more than life itself to him, was lost at the very moment he had gained her. His spirit loathed the guile which he believed had been practised upon Edith's mind; and he

could not but reproach her with some instability in her principles. But the father's heart was too full of tenderness; he yielded to the tide of his affection. This, however, could not long continue, and seeing the impossibility of combatting at the moment with the errors of his child, he bid Vavasour courteously to attend him, and led Edith to his own withdrawing-room. The stranger had disappeared.

## CHAPTER VI.

*First Officer.*—Sincerity! what is sincerity? A quality very useful in its way, but not often met with methinks.

*Second Officer.*—Sincerity certainly is rather scarce, but when met with in a right way it is truth.

*First Officer.*—What is truth?

*Second Officer.*—Ask Pontius Pilate. He was a man of the world, and see what answer he got.

If anything were necessary to prove the divine and apostolical foundation of the Church of Rome, apart from the doctrines which she teaches, and the ritual which she prescribes, it might with readiness be discovered in the force with which she appeals to those elevated qualities of human nature that lift her above earth, and connect her with heaven. If anything were wanted to show her declension from the purity of her origin, and almost entire submission to the

principle of evil it might, with equal facility, be found in the power with which the fervour and devotion which those qualities, excited and developed, are made to subserve all her secular purposes, and bend to the darkness of mystifying dogmas, the fierceness of fanaticism and the grossness of sensual occupations.

With an energy that can only arise from supernatural influence, her schemes for dominion are unceasingly at work, while, with a wisdom more than that of earth, those schemes are planned, and, when they are baffled, altered, renewed or enforced to suit the emergency of the moment. She exercises, directly, no physical power, and she possesses only a confined extent of actual territory, yet does she move princes and unthrone kings; she has abstracted kingdoms and given away empires. She has made monarchs powerless, and their subjects rebels. She has raised wars, and placed the whole civilized world in array against itself. The haughtiest spirits have bowed

to her yoke, and the withering blight of her anathema has converted a whole land into a desert, and a smiling and contented people, exhibiting all the noble qualities of a glorious race into a herd of savages, who denied the ties of blood, repudiated the claims of humanity; and, breaking all the bonds of society as in a moment, have gone back at a stride to their first state of primeval barbarism. Nay, worse, has put every man's hand against his fellow, and filled all with ferocity and distrust.

Could there have been a greater evidence of the force of mind over material substance, and of the existence, and the height of that world with which every thought and every feeling plainly tells us we are connected. She well knew that spirit as well as knowledge, is power, and with consummate ability has she worked the beverage of influence to overturn all those preceptions and principles which oppose her supremacy and countervail her dominion. She sets her spirit to oppose the

knowledge of the truth, and therefore constitutes herself the arbiter of right. Through a profound acquaintance with the springs of human action, and the prejudices and passions by which the mind is warped, she leads the way to error, and she sets herself to bend them to the promotion of her interests, by acceding to the corruptions and guiding the weaknesses of mankind. The gay frivolity of the French, the passionate sentimentalism of the Italian, the sturdy respectability of the German, the vindictive pride of the Spaniard, and the turbulent determination of the Englishman, have all more or less found a rein, and been made subservient to the promotion of her ends. With a facility that would bear that character of universality of application which is to be found alone in real Christianity, she has adapted herself with wonderful readiness to all the various phases of humanity which have been presented to her operations.

Some few priests, but they are com-

paratively few, who have been commissioned to leven the mass of Christendom, have gone forth into the length and breadth of every land; and in spite of opposition, reason, light and truth have succeeded in establishing an empire, permanent and deep, wherever their feet have trod—in some places supreme, in some places dominant, in all existent.

This tact has been assisted by a devotion and perseverance which would do honour to any cause, and which, on the recognised weakness of man's nature in spiritual things would be inexplicable if they were like that shown in the extension of truth to find their reward at a future period. But it is not so, the advantage obtained by their qualities is a present advantage, and this is the secret source of their energy, and energy is the source of their success. Among these emissaries of Rome, there are and, doubtless, always have been men, who, themselves blinded by the impure source

from which they derived their acquaintance with heavenly things, have been moved by a simple zeal for God's honour, and the love of souls. But their work so far from doing any injury to the cause which they espoused, only served to give a colourable pretence of sanctity and excellence to others who carried out aright the designs of their head, and taking the converse of the blessed Redeemer's assertion, made their kingdom to be of this world, whatever might be its connection with the next.

With astonishing foresight the Church of Rome interposes an insurmountable barrier, in the celibacy of her priests, to the enjoyment of any of those best and sweetest aspirations of our nature, which tend to draw us off from the world, which allay ambition, and unnerve pride by bringing us greater enjoyments in our homes, and which, by providing for the lawful gratification of every passion and feeling of human nature, create love and

induce peace. The theatre of the priest is the world. His object is to subdue the world, and he must act alone. Consequently, he has no home wherein his holiest and tenderest sympathies may be excited, and through which he may become amalgamated with his kind. His faculties are shut up in the cold perceptions of intellect —and all his qualities are subdued to the furtherance of that dominion which he is the agent to erect. He finds his reward in that power over men, which this dominion gives, and not in intermixture with them; and to this elevation over his species nothing is denied. But as the origin of it is not from heaven but the earth, as it does not ensue from his own natural or acquired rise in the scale of being by the development of the purer portion of his nature, but by the degradation of his subjects from the greater development of their meaner and animal qualities, the more complete is his power, the deeper is their seclusion in the scale of moral worth, and the more numerous

his adherents, the greater is the darkness by which mens' minds are quelled. To keep the priest separate from the ties of love is the object of the Church of Rome. In order that he may be powerful to retain for power, the people must be ignorant, and ignorant they are kept, because in their darkness depends their subservience to the will of their priest depends the frequency and the extent of his enjoyments and the greatness of his reward. To diffuse light would be to ruin himself, and uproot the power of his church.

It is true indeed that the agents are not themselves always conscious of the process, because the object of their training is not to purify the heart and enlarge the mind; but to imbue them with energy and ambition, and to inspire them with subtility and strength. Were not the consequences that follow the perversion of man's faculties and the misapplications of God's gifts too appallingly horrible to be contemplated—were there not another world after this, and the judgment of the Great Day, and the conse-

quences of that judgment, the cause of discipline pursued to isolate these men might be deemed a mercy; for by isolation can their fealty to their church alone be maintained. We see that whenever the natural tendencies of humanity have burst the bonds thus wound around it they shine forth as God designed they should shine forth; the intellect, becomes cleared and refined by the purity and affection of the heart; and the priest, interchanging feelings with those around, becomes a sharer in their hopes, amalgamates with the mass, and ceases to be a member of the exclusive and despotic communion to which he previously belonged.

Such an empire as that of Rome, is not secured without assistance nor retained without expenses, and therefore is she ever accruing to herself wealth that has been boundless, and proselytes who might serve not only as plausible examples, but as convenient curtains round which they might gather circles for future enlargement. The period

of the civil war in England offered an opportunity, for bringing this country back to the Papal yoke, too excellent to be neglected, not only by the corruption of its protesting opponent, the Church of England, through the divisions of sectarianism which she originated and nursed until the borders grew too mighty to be opposed, but also by creating divisions in families whereby the anarchy might be made more distressing and complete.

The position of Mr. Vavasour with regard to the family of Colonel Dornford, and the character of Edith offered too good a ground for dissevering one of the strongest and most useful adherents of the unhappy Charles to be neglected. Ardent and affectionate it was easy to lead an earnest heart, separated from those it loved, into the natural expression of attachment to Him, who, unseen, was always nigh, and to carry it aside in a way that reason does not dictate, or revelation require till it degenerated into superstition; while, unversed in casusiti-

cal discussion, and unacquainted with the principles of polemics, an obedient spirit followed where it was led, and an honest heart once convinced retained, and determined to retain, what it believed to be truth even at the sacrifice of every thing besides.

She had been purposely kept out of the way of the Endsleighs under the plea of care for her safety as soon as the parliamentarian troops occupied the Abbey until her mind had been fitly charged with conviction and matured in its principles. It had been no intention of her protectors to leave her at Chaveley during her father's stay, and when Daubigny rescued her from the flames at Burford, Vavasour was conducting her under the similar plea of security to another residence, where she might have been more open to the attacks of those who sought both her and hers.

Pere Delaval had not beheld the beauty of Edith Dornford, nor marked the witching elegance of her form without conceiving

hopes that had seldom been disappointed, and desires that, however accustomed to position, were black as the heart by which they were entertained, but which were as effectually concealed as they were strongly felt. Her broad lands, too, were a temptation to which he felt bound to yield. As he was in the habit of stopping from no scruples so had he found a fitting instrument for his designs in the artless, and devoted, but simple Vavasour, while he found an excuse for himself and a reason for his dupe in the interests of the Church.

Edith knew nought of this, and would have been happy even in the midst of trouble but that the change in her sentiments seemed to throw a bar before her with Daubigny, and interposed a chasm between herself and her father's affection which she could not view without shuddering. Her sensations therefore were of the most excruciating and depressing kind, and when, after the performance of her orisons and telling her beads, Father Hilddrant tapped

at the door of her oratory with the first beam of daylight she readily admitted him, and felt an indescribable relief in the spiritual support he came to administer.

The object of Vavasour was to confirm her allegiance to the church to which she been converted, but his own affectionate heart was touched to the core by the deep distress in which he saw the poor girl involved; and had he not believed that he had thereby secured her eternal welfare, would have wished the work were undone. His gentle manner and endearing kindness soothed her spirits, and, strengthened by the holy exercises in which they had just been engaged, she could listen with a calm spirit to the reasons he adduced for comfort and hope. To the supposition that she might fall away from the faith she held, she almost indignantly replied, and referring to the vow she had taken only the few hours before, expressed again the force and depth of her convictions. Edith was not one lightly to take up an opinion but when it

had been once adopted, full conviction must be presented to her mind before she would relinquish any portion of her belief. In the present instance the peculiar circumstances seemed to place her, adopted and in especial disadvantage, and as she reflected within herself upon her affection for her father, and his love for her, to her greater trials than the dungeon or the rack, the principle of horrors was added to confirm her resolution.

With a trembling but firm heart, and with a faltering step, Miss Dornford descended the wide staircase, that formed the grand ascent of the mansion, and, led by Mr. Vavasour, entered the breakfast parlour. Her father was not at the moment present, but there were evidences that he had been there, for among papers, books, and military despatches and regulations, was a small volume, which Edith well remembered had been the Bible of her mother. Is was long since she had seen such a book, for of late, her breviary, and

the lives of the saints, with the writings of the fathers of the Church had formed the mass of literature which she had perused. The inculcation of the prelates of Rome, of their supreme authority and undelegative power to expound the words of Holy Writ had bound her spirit down in that unlimited submission to authority on which so much of their unsanctified power is built; while the fear that her eyes might have already passed over the dreadful sentence within its leaves, which they say no unprivileged sight can dwell upon without instant and unpardonable sin, made her shudder at the sight of the very book which contains the glad tidings of great joy, and the balm for every woe.

She turned from it with a cold thrill of dread; and as she thought upon the time when she had been led to turn the leaves of that sacred volume as the highest, the best, the holiest of her privileges, and as she remembered how her young heart had leapt to respond to her Saviour's love, and

how the tears had coursed each other down her fair cheeks at the recital of His sorrows, and the story of His patience, and of all that He had endured, and endured for us, and as she saw that book, still the chosen, still the constant companion of her father's lonely hours, and knew that the same feelings that animated him then filled his mind still, that the same faith that stayed his soul for eternity amidst all his grief, was still the staff of his life, and its end the guerdon of his hope, she felt how great was the difference that had been wrought between them, and her heart, surveying the dismal gulf, swelled almost to breaking. She felt drawn, instinctively drawn to that silent monitor, as to a dear friend, and she endeavoured to lay her hand upon it, but her feelings overcame her, and recoiling from it as from a serpent, she threw herself on a chair beneath the open window, and burst into an agony of grief

The venerable father was himself too much touched to attempt at all to assuage

her grief, and when, as its power expended itself, and her beautiful features gradually lost the traces of excessive agitation, he could see that the bitterness of this sorrow was, for the moment, passed, there crept over the play of her expressive features such an air of resigned and holy affliction that he felt awed as by a being of superior order, and he dared not approach to speak of earthly things, but stood by in silent admiration and respect. To Edith, the present had passed from her perception. The past, with all its byegone incidents of hope and love, came back in the freshness of early memory, and was renewed with various complexions of interest and joy. Each stem and tree, each leaf almost of the monastic garden, on which her eyes rested, was dear to her, from some recollection of what had occurred about and near them. It was there that her mother had loved to gambol with her children, and draw from their childish sports those lessons of affection which had elevated them into asso-

ciations for after years of thoughtfulness and peace. It was there, also, when the warning but deceptive hectic, that rose-bud of promise which heralded the tomb, flushed the cheek of her beloved parent, and made her even, as a girl, admire the beauty of woman's softness, as shown in her mother's face ; it was there, that as growing weakness emaciated that once beautiful form, that Trenton Daubigny had lent her his ready support; and as she and Albert gambolled across the sward in their childish glee, their mother's eye followed them with the anxious love that only those can know, who look upon the opening tomb that shall close the scene of earthly things, and put the space of time between them and those they love. It was there that Trenton had become the eager support of the frail preparer for heaven, and with the gentleness of a girl, yet with the firmness of a man, had sustained her faltering steps. That was during the deep luxuriance of summer tide, and when

the first leaf that put on its yellow livery of decay fell withered from the stem that held it, she, who had been the object of all that care, was where "the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest."

Now every leaf had taken its autumnal hue, and the rich foliage of the trees around shone in the sunlight in a gorgeousness of colouring that could have little been expected from the lateness of the season. But the chilliness of the night had given place to a glorious sunshine, and lighted every object with the fulness of its radiance; and as the wind blew freshly over the few shrubs and plants that still lingered in bloom, it refreshed the brow of the poor girl, and seemed to lead her mind from the scene of sublunary things to those holy and bright regions where the spirit of her sainted mother freed from all care, and every instant, as she loved to fancy, engaged in offices of affection for those whom she loved. The thought led her up from time to eternity, and comparing the little-

ness of the present with the glories that shall be enduringly revealed in the future; she lifted up her heart for strength to stay her in her principles, and for the conversion of those she loved, that where she was, thither they might attain.

Vavasour watched her countenance with an anxious and afflicted heart, and when he saw, by the settled yet solemn brow, this quiet features, and the intermingled sighs that her principles were safe, he could have wept for joy; and exhorting his charge to be steadfast unto the end, he waited, without further parley, till the Colonel should appear. Yet, notwithstanding his resolve, such is the weakness of human nature; it was without anxiety that both heard the hand of Colonel Dornford on the lock of the door as he entered, and it was not until he had been some moments in the room, that either ventured to look it. But one glance told her how dearly and deeply she was loved; and the next instant the father and daughter were locked in each others' arms.

To the Colonel, the night had been a season of no less grief and sorrow than it had been to Edith, and the nervous pallor of his countenance told how much he had undergone; whilst the subdued tones of his voice showed how much of it still remained. The repast was passed in silence, which none seemed inclined to break; but when, on its conclusion, the Colonel saw a slight inclination of the head, and Edith kissed a crucifix that hung round her neck; his resolution not to speak, until some more fitting opportunity should arise, gave way to the impulse of the moment, and gently taking the chain in his hand, he said.

"This a beautiful piece of workmanship, my Edith; but why wear it round your neck as now?"

"I thought not, dear father," she replied, as taking one of his hands into hers, she looked up with a countenance full of tenderness and affection, yet with so much of that placid, pallid patience which her mother had so frequently exhibited in her last ill-

ness, that he could hardly believe it was not his wife who sat before him. "I thought not, dear father, that it would offend you."

"Nor does it; but why did I witness you but now kiss the figure attached to it. It there any peculiar recollection that has excited your love for the trinket?"

"Nothing, dear father," returned Edith, with some little surprise. "This is only lately purchased, but you see it has the figure of the blessed Saviour carved, and I kissed it in reverence to Him.

"Is He honoured, think you, my Edith in this adoration of a senseless piece of matter. I should that you would eschew such vanities. The great God, who made Heaven and earth, and who dwelleth not in temples made with hands, looks for the worship of the heart, and great in His might, will not have his glory given to another.

"Neither would I give it, but I know how great and holy, as well as generous He is, and when I think thereupon, I am conscious how far I have departed from His

holy will, and that I am unworthy to approach to His presence. As I cannot have the cross on which the Great Redeemer was stretched, I carry this crucifix which the mother of God hath blessed."

"Speak not thus blasphemously, my child."

"I would not anger you, my dear father," said Edith, fondly looking up into his face, "and, therefore, would I say nought of this matter."

"Edith, Edith," said Colonel Dornford, rising to his feet, and all the father's heart mantling in his expressive countenance, "Thou has been bred to love and fear thy God, and to honour thy king. The sainted creature who called thee child, and who now dwells in those bright realms above where the holy angels ever sing the praises of the Most High—ever taught thee to cleave to thy Saviour as the rock of thy salvation. She showed thee the way of righteousness. She taught thy infant steps to run in the paths of God's holy truth, and thy little lips to

sing his praise. She showed thee that to Him, and Him alone, thou dost owe unshaken fealty; and when her pure spirit was about to wing its way to the abodes of bliss, she did expressly charge thee, as thou didst love thy life, as thou didst fear thy God, that thou shouldest not depart from the way of truth. Oh! methinks I see her now," said the Colonel, "as inch by inch her life was ebbing, and each hard drawn breath was labouring to quit her delicate and beautiful form—oh! how delicate and beautiful, God only knoweth—and as her dear hands were clasped in prayer for thee and me, and even her very heart breathed forth the petition that thou mightest above all be kept from the pollutions of the world, and the errors of the deceiving one. As she uttered the words the thin blue veins, that wandered over her transparent skin like veins of marble grew, bluer and bluer still, until I thought it was the hue of Heaven they had caught and reflected before she left this earth. I looked

upon her countenance, as past all hope of earthly care, she lay in the quietude of her patience before me, and I expected to see the light of that Heaven, where there is neither sun nor moon, to lighten it, but the Lamb is the light thereoff, gleam upon her features, but they were pale as a cloudless stone, yet did her eyes gleam with the loveliness of love; and as the ashy hue of death yielded to the energy of her soul it was all lit up as by a ray of sunlight. She revived but to call on thee, and the last unfinished words, that hovered on her heaven-touched mouth, was an exhortation to keep thee true. Now even, now, doth she look down from her home of happiness, and see that thou art lost, forsaken, and forgotten. Oh, Edith, Edith! would, would that I had died ere I had known of this—" and the strong man bowed before the force of his emotions in endeavouring to restrain the bitterness of his grief, and cried out in the anguish of his soul.

"Father, dearest father, speak not

thus!" exclaimed Edith, as sinking upon one knee she bathed his hands with her fast falling tears. "I am not yet forgotten, I trust I am not yet forsaken. The Great God, who hath cared for us thus far, will yet keep us unto the end. We may be again united, and, happy as we have ever been again, thank Him for his love, and worship Him in the beauty of Himself."

"Wilt thou then forsake these errors which thou hast thus been lately professed," said the Colonel, as a sudden ray of hope passed quickly through his heart. "Wilt thou again be my own dear Edith, again cleave to that rock of ages, whom thou hast been taught to love! Wilt thou, my Edith? Wilt thou? Speak, and gladden thy father's heart!"

"Alas, alas! my father!" she returned, pressing his hands with the earnestness of her love, while her tears flowed afresh in the violence of her grief, "I cannot—will not deceive you. My mind hath been convinced that I have been in a course of aliena-

tion from the truth, and the mother of God herself hath spoken to tell me I am right. Tell me not this, dear father, and we will ove as we have ever done before—"

"Love as we have done before, my Edith! If thou holdest to these vile deceits that can never be. Dost thou look for unity where there is such full division, can we look for communion where every feeling jars? We did love as father never yet hath loved a child, or child a father. One thought—one feeling—one hope did animate us both. The same blessed book that conveyed to me the message of a Saviour's love gave thee thy hopes of Heaven. Nought intervened to stay the sweet interchange of thought and heart. We began to live on earth that we might live in Heaven, and as I pointed thy youthful inquiries into the world of nature, and marked how our God had blessed this world with riches, and with joy, we took Him for the Creator of all its weal; and when our eyes did range the countless multitude of stars that gem the

sky we sped beyond the wide conclave in in which they glisten, and entered on the courts beyond. We felt we loved together because in addition to our earthly hopes we had the same guerdon for eternity, but now—"

"Urge me not, urge me not thus," returned Edith, as with broken sobs she was borne down alike by the grief which these recollections had conjured up both in himself and her. "Urge me no more—Could I be convinced—but no! it is not possible. Father Hildebrand, help me, or I am lost!" Yet strong as her feelings were there was no failing in Edith Dornford's heart. It indeed was wrong but she knew not the extent of its error.

Vavasour heard her appeal, and he felt how deeply he had been concerned in causing the sorrow he witnessed; but he felt confident it was for Edith's welfare, and he was thus assured by that which would otherwise have overwhelmed him, and while he endeavoured to raise the weeping girl to a

seat he entreated the Colonel to moderate the violence of his emotion.

"Moderate!" returned the Colonel, "who can be moderate when he finds his jewel of highest price stolen from his grasp, and thou hast been the thief."

"My friend, I forgive you, for you know not what you say. Let me at least aid you in restoring her. See, she has fainted."

"Viper, wretch, stand off!" exclaimed the Colonel, in a voice of thunder, completely overcome by grief and anger; then bearing her in his arms to a couch, he took her hand, and, chafing it between his own, covered her forehead and temples with the kisses of his fervent love.

Vavasour approached to assist in her recovery, but, as he stood within a few feet of the couch, the jealous eye of Dornford caught his movement, and stretching his arm to its utmost length, imperiously waving him off, he exclaimed, with a fierceness which the priest could not misunderstand—

"Stand off, sir, stand off, or as I live I will smite thee to the earth."

"Peace be unto you—my peace I give unto you," said a soft voice, quoting the holy words of the adorable Redeemer, as pushing the arm of his friend gently from him, the speaker advanced to the couch on which the yet inanimate girl was laid. A physician better adapted to the case, was at hand, it was the worthy pastor who came to soothe Edith; and rendering softer and more efficacious assistance, the poor patient opened her eyes again upon the scene of her sorrow and trial. A little restorative administered, and she sat up, more delicate indeed in appearance than before, yet still awake, and in the possession of perfect consciousness.

## CHAPTER VII.

To you your father should be as a god,
One that composed your beauties; yea, and
One to whom you are but as a form in wax
By him imprinted, and within his power
To learn the figure, or disfigure it.

THE sound of his footsteps was hardly off the garden of the little cottage, after the pastor had dismissed his guests, when a well-known tap at the door informed Mr. Endsleigh that witless Will was waiting a summons to enter. By what means the boy acquired it, or how it was that he remained undiscovered while obtaining his information none could

tell, but certain it was that nothing ever occurred connected with those for whom he entertained regard with which he was not acquainted. Whether it was, that houseless and destitute as he was often accustomed to be, in consequence of his mother being employed by her neighbours, sometimes for days together, at which periods the poor dullard cared not to visit his solitary home, or from an adventurous spirit of enterprise, which existed strongly within him, he frequently lurked in corners and concealments where few expected him to be, and thus came to know things, the actors of which little supposed had any other spectators or auditors than themselves. Or whether it was that when employed, as he often was, as a messenger, words frequently dropped in his presence from a careless supposition that he either did not heed or understand their meaning, there was no saying; but from whatever cause, he had many times brought useful and important news to the

Rector, the want of which might have been of serious consequence.

At all times his communications were sufficiently enigmatical, but on this occasion his statement had been particularly dark, and all that the pastor could make out was that some grievous misfortune impended over the family at the Abbey; and therefore after a few minutes' consideration, his first impulse was adopted, and notwithstanding her earnest persuasions he left the anxious companion of his trials alone for the first time since their residence in the cottage.

The domestics at the Abbey hailed him with a greeting of hearty good will, and asked him, without ceremony, into the breakfast-room of Colonel Dornford, where the first glance at the scene had induced him to borrow the words of him, who though he brought the sword of division to cleave the union of those evils with which the earth was filled, left a legacy of peace to heal the wound.

With a calmer mind than the Colonel, Mr. Endsleigh, proceeded to soothe the agitated girl, and gently raising her, whilst her head rested upon his shoulders, supported her until the excess of her emotion should subside. By degrees her heaving bosom lost its swell, and though weakened by the trial, through which, within the last four-and-twenty hours she had passed, she yet retained all the self-possession and decision of character that had marked her from the commencement. Vavasour stood by with folded hands, whilst her father paced the room with hurried and unequal steps.

"Cease this trembling my gentle Edith," said the pastor, using the appellation with which he had addressed her in former days, "and know that your dear parent seeks only your good. This prejudice or misconception will yield in time to the dictates of reason; give him therefore the assurance that you will think again of these matters."

"That most truly will I give him, but I shall fail in the respect I owe to so good,

and kind a parent if I held out any suppositions that my views will change," said Edith, in those silvery tones that made the Colonel's heart leap within him.

Ah! how did he dwell on those accents, and yet with what bitterness and sorrow did he listen to the conclusion of the sentence. Mild, yet earnest in his thoughts, he had, until lately, been the last to entertain animosity or ill will; but the cause of this unhappy war had opened up so many circumstances of the evil and its consequences occasioned to his country by Romanism, that the bounds of his usual prudence were overstepped, whilst with a feeling of repugnance and dread, he said,

"Edith Dornford, as the father whom thou art bound to honour, I charge thee, say not so. A separation of principle is a separation of heart—a separation of heart is a separation of home, and if such is your resolution I cast thee off for ever!"

For some minutes his child looked upon

him with stupified amazement. That the alteration of her principles would bring woe and trial she had fully calculated; that it would occasion that continual struggle in which the mind has to contend against its associations and the heart; and that it would cause a cutting off of a portion of that sweet intercourse, that whole love, with those to whom her affections were so tenderly united, she had expected. But that she should be thus repudiated—that she should be cast off into the wide world without a home to go to, or a friend to receive her, was more than she had anticipated. Nay, that her father's heart should be turned against her—that he who had watched over her infant sleep and smiled a happiness upon her childish play—that he, to whom her affections turned with a tenderness in this, the dark hour of her grief—that he should shut up his soul against her, was what she had not looked for. The blow came with a force proportionate to its unexpected weight, and it bowed her to the

ground. She wept not—she fainted not—she exclaimed not—but a deep feeling rose within her bosom as if her heart was filling, and its swelling stopped the current of her breath; strangulation appeared to choke her utterance. A dark series of undefined images floated before her eyes—a tissue of miseries—palpable to sense—rose in bodily shape before her. Absence, deprivation, solitude, contempt, neglect, a lonely cell and unknown grave, in the dark nook of some religious burial place, appeared with all that vividness and force of colouring, and that rapidity of transit with which madness conceives its thoughts.

A slight tremor ran through her whole frame as she contemplated the odious objects, yet no sickness oppressed her—no weakness enervated her mind. Her body had lost its functions; and, as they gazed upon her countenance, the thrill of fear passed like an electric shock through all that her reason had fled its throne. But no, as the terribleness of the strife grew, the energy of inter-

nal rectitude subdued it all; and her spirit, rising with the occasion that called it forth, upheld the mind and sustained the determination. Had there been ten thousand times more to suffer than now presented itself to her appalled imagination, she would have braved the worst in the path of duty. Still no fierce feeling of opposition or regret rose to express the sense of injustice which she entertained, but her love and respect for her father predominating, she exclaimed in the subdued, yet perfect, tones, which spoke both her sorrow and resolution:

"When thy father and thy mother forsake thee, saith my God, I will take thee up."

The Colonel was paralysed; yet, in the belief of his own rectitude, he was wound up beyond the power of endurance, and, while pangs of anguish were lacerating his soul, he could not retract.

"Oh! say not so, dear girl," said the Rector, with ineffable softness. "Say not thus—give one ray of comfort to a father's

heart, and promise that you will, ere long, renounce these errors, these apprehensions. Believe me they are nothing else."

"Who dares to question the impulses of the Spirit of Grace," interrupted Vavasour, who had long been attempting to obtain silence, but who was now excited beyond his patience; "and put a lie for the truth, and delude a child of God to her destruction. Remember, old man, thou art thyself near unto the place of darkness. Thy hoary hairs even now tell thee that thou hast one foot on the threshold of eternity. Seek not to lead another from the company of the blessed saints; but do thou renounce thy own heresies, and turn to the holy Mother the Church, who late as is the hour of thy pilgrimage, hath her arms open to receive thee, and show thee to thy rest. Faint not, my daughter," he continued, addressing Edith. "Faint not at this tribulation, for by passing through the waters of affliction, thou shalt come to the realms of light."

Well acquainted with his person, the pastor had, at the instant, forgotten the change which had been shown in Mr. Vavasour's views, and he looked with unfeigned astonishment at him, as he uttered these, to him, otherwise inexplicable words. Gradually, however, the truth grew upon him; and, as his mind reverted to the several steps by which the principles of Edith had been perverted, a feeling of indignant contempt rose at the ingratitude of the man, which exceeded the offence he took at the indignity put upon his Church.

"Thy warnings, friend," he at length returned, "may well be retained for thyself; and when I see thee, who, serpent-like, hast crept into the bosom of a man's family, and under the deceitful guise of open-hearted kindness, lured from him the jewel of his earthly life, I wonder not at the damnable heresies by which thy church seeks to impose the yoke of her bondage on the necks of all whom she can draw within her grasp. That God, whose eyes are too pure to

look upon iniquity, knows full well the dark mystery of wickedness of which thou art become an agent, and will, in His own good time, dash it in pieces like a potter's vessel. Avaunt thee, thou limb of the man of sin! Avaunt thee, and leave this child to the tenderness of those who nurtured her early years."

"And leave her to destruction. No, Master Endsleigh, I acknowledge not thy vaunts, nor do I return thy revilings; but He, whose servant I am, hath taught me to be faithful unto death; and I leave not the maiden to the wiles that might again bring her within the gulf of destruction, unless she herself shall will it, for 'the mercies of the wicked are cruel.'"

"Deem you this right and just, Master Vavasour," said Colonel Dornford, "to take upon you, in a man's own house, the direction of his child."

"If heaven, friend Dornford, hath confided this child to my spiritual care, shall I be a traitor to her interests and desert her

now. But by her own lips will I be judged."

Colonel Dornford saw that, with a character like Edith's, constraint would be useless, and indeed he would have scorned to use it, if it could have at all availed. He loved his daughter, but he respected her also; and even, at this time, when his heart was wrung to bursting, and all means seemed desirable to obviate the evil of losing his child, he thought only of appealing to her principles of faith, and her affection for himself.

"Speak, my Edith, speak," said he, "and tell Master Vavasour that you still respond to the calls of duty and of love."

"Yea, tell this man, fair girl," added Master Endsleigh, "that those sweet hopes, those simple joys, which in childhood and in youth, you so fully knew, are still yours. At least, defer your decision until time hath been taken for judgment and reflection."

But the web had been thrown too strongly around her. Edith could see only, in

all that passed, a trial of her faith; and in proportion to its severity, did she deem herself bound in honour to abide her tryst. Yet was it a stroke that almost bowed her to the ground, and, with an hysterical sob, she threw herself into the arms of Vavasour, exclaiming—

"Alas, I must, I must be true."

"Then begone," exclaimed her father; "for child of mine thou no longer art."

The effort at firmness, however, was but momentary, he fell, in a mingled anguish of disappointment and grief, on the pastor's shoulder. While Vavasour led Edith in silence from the room. The triumph of craft was, for the time, complete.

## CHAPTER. VIII.

Night's swift dragons cut the clouds full fast
And yonder shines Aurora's harbinger,
At whose approach, ghosts, wandering her and there,
Swop home to churchyards.

SHAKESPEARE.

THE sleep of Trenton Daubigny was troubled and uncertain. Accustomed to the unexpected accidents of a soldier's life, and living, in a state of civil warfare, it might well be expected that change of place, or the prospect of new companions would have caused little of the unsettledness of feeling which he experienced.

Nor did they, for to those vicissitudes he was well accustomed. But there was a novelty in his present situation which particularly excited his spirits. He had never before been dispatched on any expedition, the success of which depended solely upon his own exertions, and though wary enough, and active enough, in performing a part, the character of principal had never yet fallen to his share. There was, besides, a necessity in the present case, for the assumption of disguise, and that was a thing so foreign to his feelings, that he felt great doubt of performing his part in the drama well, and not a little did he mistrust the prudence and the spirit of the person who had been assigned to him for an attendant.

More than all, however, his pulse suffered a feverish fluctuation when he thought of Edith Dornford, and the probability that he might obtain some clue to her retreat.

The information they had derived from the dispatches forwarded by him from Burford, had left him to suppose that she had

found refuge under the roof of some sectarian preacher of the opposite party, but where or with whom was a mystery that he endeavoured in vain to solve. That some change had come over her principles there could be no question, though of what character he had not been able to learn, and he hoped that it was such, as emanating from the heart rather than the head, indicated an encreased regard for that which is great and good, and prompted her to take up with a set of maxims which were enticing from their purity and elevation, though unsound in their foundation, and based in no scriptural truth. The fact was in itself important, and the alteration in her views, whatever it might be, served, at least, to argue an instability of mind which he would not have expected to find in Edith Dornford. So far, however, from lessening that affection for her, which from a child he had cherished and lived upon, it tended rather to fan the flame of his desire to serve one to whom he was so

tenderly attached, and he determined to use his utmost energy to discover her abode immediately on his arrival in the metropolis.

These feelings were deep and powerful, but they did not alone occupy him; for the commission with which Colonel Dornford had entrusted him, was of too much importance to be lightly regarded, and early, therefore, as was the hour at which he had retired, the deep silence and the solemn obscurity of midnight had passed, ere he closed his eyes. His sleep was fitful and unsettled, and the gushes of the stormy wind as it occasionally swept across the window of his little dormitory, mingled in its blasts with the wandering fancies of his dreams, and kept him in a state of continual and unsettled excitement.

Scarcely had this state of half unconsciousness subsided into refreshing sleep, in which the fatigues and cares of the day were alike forgotten, when a gentle tap at the door informed him that it was time to

rise. A brief period sufficed for his toilet, and when he entered the only sitting-room of his host's humble mansion, he found Greetwell, who presented a packet containing his introductions and directions, and a commendation to a good journey. In a corner of the room sat Master Metcalfe, doing ample justice to the breakfast which had been already prepared for his equally energetic but less voracious principal. He was attired in a suit of sober aspect, and but for the rubicund visage which seemed to intimate too frequent an acquaintance with the bottle, few men would have taken him for any other than the awakened sinner which he appeared. There were, however, two or three dark crimson spots upon his cheek, and an improving carbuncle upon his nose, which told a tale that was hardly in accordance with the appearance he bore. Yet his closely fitting vest and trousers of deep brown, tied up at the knees with ribbons of fawn-colour, gave him an air of agility

which would have been little expected in the garments of his own providing.

Trenton was clad in a similar manner. Clothes of nearly the same colour, but trimmed and edged with black velvet, while a high-crowned hat of the novel shape, and surrounded by a band, in which a feather was somewhat jauntily placed, set off his fine figure to the utmost advantage.

Trenton Daubigny was nearly six feet in height, and was gifted with a power of muscle and a nervous system of such tension that few men would have cared to encounter him in single combat. A short mantle of dark cloth lined with silk, and somewhat foppishly edged with fur, hung from his shoulders, while, by his side, one of those small swords was attached, which though too light for strenuous service in the field, were yet much stronger than the common rapier, and calculated to be of very effective use in a skirmish, or in a contest with a single antagonist. His fine dark brown hair was cropped short behind,

as well as before, and when poor Mistress Endsleigh first observed him, she avowed he looked so much like a Roundhead, that she could not bear to see him. The worthy Rector was equally surprised at the change, but congratulated him on the facility with which he might pass for a follower of Essex or of Fairfax on some peaceable expedition.

A cheerful fire and an ample provision greeted him on entering the confined sitting-room, though it wanted two hours to daylight; and he could not but reflect, with a sense of admiration, upon the devoted attachment thus evinced by his parishioners to their pastor, inducing them to endure every inconvenience, provided they ministered to his comfort. Trenton observed the young rustic, who acted as purveyor in chief to the establishment, eye him with much curiosity, but he was too deeply absorbed in the affair he had in hand to regard it longer than for the passing moment.

Before he had finished his repast, the trampling of horses, and a slight tap at the window intimated the presence of messengers from the Abbey. It proved to be a servant, whom the Colonel had forwarded with further instructions, as he himself did not wish to be seen in the neighbourhood of the cottage, and from whom he learned that a guide was waiting outside the park gate in anxious trepidation and haste to depart.

The young soldier was too much accustomed to the alertness of a military life to waste time unnecessarily, when alacrity was required; taking therefore a hurried, but affectionate farewell of his kindly hosts, he vaulted on his able and strongly built charger, and attended by his follower was soon in the lane on the outside of the park. The frosty air blew keenly across his cheek, and drawing his cloak closely around him he gladly put his horse on a pace likely to prove more easy for their progress,

drawing bridle after a while to survey the fine champaign country around; for, as his object was to reach London, if possible, without encountering any of the detachments from either army, it was immaterial what road they travelled, if they could but avoid interruption.

They stood evidently in a verge of swelling land, which, stretching out far, both to the right and left, formed a portion of a series of hills, which served partly as a boundary between Oxfordshire and Berks. Before them lay an open valley, into which the rise gradually declined, and beyond it, at the distance of some four or five miles, another rise presented itself, of a similar kind,—an open, breezy upland.

To the right, the hill, which was richly wooded with fine ash-trees, broke suddenly away, forming a somewhat precipitous declivity, round which the main road of the district wound. Other tracks intersected

the country in different places, and Trenton was at some loss which to prefer. The one on which he was at present making his way, led straight across the country, and he knew it ended to the right on the other side of the opposite wall; but it led through a neighbourhood where he was very likely to fall in with flying bodies of the enemy's horse, with whom he had no particular wish to meet.

One led directly towards Reading, which he knew they held in force; but aware also that George had driven in several of their outposts, he had almost decided upon taking that route, when the glare thrown back from a dark and compact moving mass, which he believed could come from nothing but a body of horse, induced him to pause. A few minutes sufficed to dissolve the slight doubt which he had entertained, and as it approached, he could distinguish the Parliamentarian standards high over the pikes and swords of several squadrons of heavy cavalry as they swept

across the plain, with a couple of great guns behind them towards the very point which he was about to approach. Concealing themselves behind the shadow of some trees, he could plainly perceive the hauberks of Sir Arthur Haselrigge's curassiers, and the peculiar helmet of Cromwell's ironsides as they passed, at a brisk trot, within half a mile of him.

The last speck of darkness was passing over the height, and the cloud of dust which they raised indicated the departure of the enemy from his immediate neighbourhood before Trenton thought it advisable to move from his place of refuge. Sufficient reason had now been assigned for his taking the right hand road, and without further consideration, he spurred his horse into a rapid trot, followed by Metcalfe, with many vain attempts to preserve his centre of gravity in comfort either to himself or his steed. They had not ridden half a dozen miles, and the thought that so considerable a body having

passed would, in all probability, have cleared the road of the republicans, when a consideration for his own steed, as well as for the wants of his less able follower, induced Trenton to look out for a hostel, where he might bestow himself until evening approached, as it suited not with his convenience to travel, until the afternoon should have waned sufficiently to cause part of his journey to be made in the night.

Occupied with these thoughts, he had rapidly turned a bluff rise of land, when he felt the pikes of a couple of sentries close upon his breast. To the demands of who he was, he replied, with as much calmness as he could command, that he was a trader travelling from Bristol to London, for the sale of his wares, under the protection of a Parliamentary pass ; but that he had been beset on the previous night, and eased of all saving his horse, and money sufficient to barely defray his expenses to the end of his journey.

To this account an incredulous smile

was vouchsafed, and he was immediately handed over, with Metcalfe, to a picket of half-dozen men, who, conducting them for a couple of hundred yards, over a small rise in the grounds, reported them to the officer in command, and who at the moment of their introduction was engaged in an occupation too interesting to be interrupted by business of such a trifling kind.

Seated within a little nook, formed by the retirement of the hill, was a young man, attired in the uniform of one of the enemy's cavalry regiments, though which it was, Trenton was rejoiced to perceive he could not tell. His helmet had been thrown aside, and lay on the ground near him, while his gorget was unbuckled at the shoulders so as to give more play for his interesting occupation. Between his legs, as he was on the ground, was a large dish containing a pie, flanked by flasks of *eau-de-vié*, from which he, with two or three other officers was regaling himself. At a short distance on both sides, strewed on the

grass or leisurely walking to and fro, whilst their officers finished their repast, was a body of from fifty to sixty troopers, all completely armed, ready at a moment's notice to mount their horses, which were tied in sets of six or eight to a stake, driven into the ground and about which their provender was placed.

At short distance was an officer of the royal army, sitting in moody silence, absorbed in meditations, which appeared to be anything but agreeable. As he raised his head at the noise of his approach. Trenton perceived, to his grief and surprise, that it was Sir Hugh Palser, but he rejoiced to find that no token of recognition crossed his countenance, and he therefore congratulated himself in the sufficiency of his disguise. Another glance told him that the parties on either side of the republican officer were Power and Mackachlan, who appeared to take their captivity with a much more philosophic spirit than Sir Hugh did his defeat, for it was evident that

he had been overcome, and his prisoner, released.

Within a few yards of the largest group of soldiery he recognised the troopers of his own regiment, who had formed the escort, unhorsed, and most of them wounded, while all were manacled together like felons. The frank countenance of Heseltine was conspicuous among the rest. He was not united to the others, but fettered with a heavier chain and apart from the group. There was a harassed look and uneasiness about him, for which the mere accidents of war could not account, and when upon seeing and instantly recognising Daubigny he started, an additional gloom passed across his features.

Trenton dismounted as he approached the breakfast group, and stood ready to answer any inquiries that might be made of him. A spasmodic twitch across the lips of Power told Daubigny that he immediately knew him through his disguise, but the particularly close attention of their

captor to his dictatorial duties, saved his perceiving it, and the Irishman had too much self-command to indicate, in any way, his knowledge of the new comer. Maclachlan gave a heavy stare, but betrayed not the slightest perception of his real character.

"A brave mess my frien' ye hae put afore us," said the brawny scot. "I ken no whether it be not as gude as a dish o' oatmeal parritch filled wi garlick."

"Truly mine excellent acquaintance you evince but a small taste in these matters. I assure you that this venison, sir, is better, than all the porridge that ever was made. I thought the gallant Wilmot and Goring and the other excellent men who exhibit such gentlemanly qualities in your ranks had brought out a right knowledge of those things."

"The dew, at any rate, is well worth the having, my darling avourneen," said Power, as he put down the flask which he had just emptied.

"Pretty clean in the mouth I think, Captain Power," said the Parliamentarian. "And good it ought to be, for Father Machshane was kind enough to bring it all the way from Connaught for my peculiar drinking, and sooth to say there are many worse things than a tip of whisky after one of those confounded long night rides which Master Cromwell is continually giving us."

"Father Machshane, a priest, is it, did you say, brought it? then truth I'll e'en take another drap out of respect for his reverence."

"Then I will pledge you, Captain Power, for truly are ye a companion after my own heart, and Sir Hugh there will have nothing to say to us," and setting down the pipkin, he laid himself leisurely along the grass in the full glare of the autumnal sun which yet appeared to have retained some of its summer heat. "But who have we here," he continued, as he looked up to where Daubigny and his follower had been

placed before him. The young dragoon's handsome countenance appeared to pleased him, for he inquired, with less asperity than might have been expected from the interruption.

"A cloth merchant from Bristol, an please you, most worthy sir," said Trenton, humbly taking off his hat, and bowing low, "traveller under favour of a pass from the excellent Master Fiemlas."

The assumption of the character cost him much, and it was barely with calmness that he made the reply. The aspect of Heseltine struck him to the soul, and terrible as was the hazard in which he himself stood—for he knew that if discovered the disgraceful death of a spy instantly awaited him—he determined, if possible, to save him though he saw not the issue of the interprize which he projected. He rightly surmised that Heseltine himself was taken as a spy, though for what reason his life was thus long preserved he could not conceive.

"You seem to be very decently appointed, my friend," said the republican; "for a cloth merchant," and he pointed to the sword by his side, and the pistols which filled his holsters.

"If you mean, worthy sir, the money which I bring with me, truly, indeed, are you mistaken; for I have barely wherewithal to carry me to my journey's end. But if you speak of these," as he laid his hand upon the pistols, "my friend and I found need of them."

"The Lord knoweth," said the cobbler, who, with characteristic energy, immediately perceived the drift which Daubigny had taken.

Maclachlan was too much engaged in diminishing the last remnants of the pasty to be altogether awake, but Sir Hugh lifted his head in excessive astonishment though Power, with more tact, looked on as an unconcerned spectator.

"Truly, my friend," said the other whose respect for Trenton's imposing aspect

had amazingly declined on hearing the nature of his supposed pursuits, "the matter seemeth somewhat of a riddle unto me, perhaps you will read it. I should have thought that a Parliament pass might have carried you safely to London without the aid of arms. Beside this steed seems to throw his head about as if he knew the smell of steel."

"And so did we set out, but as we came on the second day of our journey nigh unto the good town of Newbury a party of malignant soldiery did set upon us, and after robbing us, as they supposed, of all we had, left us apparently naked and destitute. Happily, we had concealed somewhat in the lining of our vests, and when they released us, after carrying us twenty miles out of the road, left us to find our way as we could, I suggested to my friend that, with our new garments, we should purchase us also at Burford, near which place they left us, arms wherewith to defend us against

the robbers who prowl about the heaths in the neighbourhood of the great city."

"Well," said the republican, "this would seem to be a plausible story, and I am feign to believe it."

"Fortunately, worthy sir," returned the supposed cloth merchant, "there is one here who can confirm it; for that fellow, whom I see in chains there, is, if I mistake not, the leader of the band."

This was a stroke which fully confirmed Trenton's story; for the republican full well knew that Heseltine had indeed on the day in question been in the neighbourhood described, and, anxious to forward his own promotion by furthering the plans of the parliamentary leaders for protecting their allegiants, he immediately determined to fathom the matter. Calling, therefore, to the two sentries, who stood as guard over him, they brought Heseltine, and placed him before their commander, who again inquired if this were really the same man. As if to confirm, or do away with his im-

pressions, Daubigny advanced close to the culprit, and hastily whispering to leap his horse, and ride away soon as opportunity should offer, he turned round to say that he was confident that this was really the person.

The well-bred animal recognised, at once, the tones of his favourite attendant, as Heseltine denied the charge, and bending his head winnowed over the hand that so frequently fed him. A determination to follow his friend's advice was the first impulse of his mind; but the recollection of the peril in which such a proceeding would place the life of Daubigny, immediately assuaged the desire for his own safety, and he determined to abide his fate. Yet did the love of life tug strongly at his heart strings. The dark grave, with all its attendant horrors, came up before his imagination like a deep thunder-cloud. To hold any communication with his beloved master, was an utter impossibility, for the eyes of Captain Ellerton were full upon them both. Power

trembled as he saw the horse every moment more and more fondling the hand of his attentive groom, and with difficulty, could Heseltine refrain from returning the caress, To have dared death in its most horrible shape, was a thing to which he was fully equal; but this terrible strife was beyond his power of endurance, and his limbs trembled through every joint. Thv big drops of perspiration stood upon his brow, while a copious dew suffused his forehead ; to stay or to go, if he had the opportunity, seemed alike impossible to him.

The doubts of his character, which Ellerton entertained, gave way before, as he conceived, these tokens of guilt, and he was about to order an increased shackle to be put upon his limbs, when the long drawn, piercing note of a trumpet broke upon the air. Springing upon a ledge of the hillside, he perceived a small cavalcade of horsemen approaching at a rapid pace, about the distance of a mile and a half.

"The General, by Jove," he cried, as

jumping down, he immediately gave orders to his men to form. The sentries, on either side of Heseltine, uncertain what to do, were looking in the direction of the General's approach.

"Now—now," exclaimed Trenton to Heseltine, as the favourable moment presented itself.

Heseltine cast one glance over his shoulder, it told him that, and that only, was his time. Captain Ellerton and his sentinel were engaged; the men were in confusion; death stared him in the face. The inherent love of existence prevailed. Dashing the sentry on his left to the ground with the chain that bound his hands, he leapt, at one bound, upon the horse. The steed well knew his rider, and fled like lightning at his word. Daubigny threw himself forward as if to catch his horse, but in reality to floor the trooper, whom he immediately bore to the ground with his weight. Metcalfe was nearly thrown, as the animal on which he was mounted immedi-

ately followed the example of its companion, and both were bounding like the wind across the vale. Trenton had calculated on the speed and power of his horse, and good occasion had he to trust them. A shot, two, three, then half a dozen poured in upon the flying trooper and his miserable comrade. Every moment Metcalfe seemed as if the next step would be his last, as with head-long haste the horses bounded in their mad career.

Hardly a breath had passed, ere twenty of the Republican troopers, with the lieutenant at their head, were in pursuit. Scattered over the open ground, they attempted to intercept their flight, but the hope was a vain one so long as a clear course was left before the pursued, for the cavalier's horses were far too fast to be overtaken. They cleared their way at a tremendous pace. Once, indeed, and only once, there seemed a chance that the chase would be successful. A broad, deep water-course intercepted the plain at a distance of little

more than a mile from the bivouac, which ran on with a dark and turbid stream, and looked even wider than it was. To Heseltine even it appeared a tremendous leap, while a stone wall on the other side, nearly three feet high, appeared an insurmountable object; but he knew his steed, and the danger was pressing. With a slight impress of the knees he raised him to the leap, and the gallant horse cleared it like a bird at a single bound, and without a stay. But to Metcalfe the water offered an impediment, which, though he had not time to think, he dared not clear, and he unconsciously checked his horse. It was sufficient to prevent the bound.

Heseltine was over, and was preparing to pursue his course, when he missed the hoofs of his companion's steed. At once he saw his difficulty, and was about to push on, when the thought struck him that, like Daubigny, he might be some one whose life would be forfeited by his capture. His own safety was immediately forgotten, and

again clearing the drain, he stood by the side of the panting and impatient horse of Metcalfe. Already their pursuers seemed to be upon them; but wheeling a few yards round, he bid the rider hold fast, and seizing the bridle, while the shouts of the Parliament troopers seemed to be upon their very shoulders, he led them boldly to the leap, and both horses stood on the opposite side shivering and panting with the excessive fatigue.

Nor were the pursuers much less tired by the pace at which they had come over the rough field; and as the leaders were about pushing their horses to the leap, with cries of rage and disappointment, the royalist soldier met them with a laugh of defiance, and slipping the chain from his wrist, which he had already freed from one of his hands, he flung it in their faces. A volley of carbine shots, fired at random, was the reply. The signal was too serious to be disregarded; and as he saw some of the republicans, who unable to leap the drain,

about to ford it, he seized a pistol from the holster, and almost before the report was heard, he perceived the officer of his opponents incline backward to the crupper of his saddle, and then drop down dead into the water-course.

To offer further parley would have been madness. He turned to flee, and the brief breathing thus allowed to their steeds, gave them fresh spirits; while the few who had crossed the drain, soon saw how fruitless it would be to pursue them further, and Trenton and his fellow soldiers had the satisfaction of observing their disappearance on the distant hill. Turning round, the pursuers laid the body of the lieutenant across his horse, and returned sorrowfully to their comrades, among whom circumstances were occurring but little calculated to increase their relish for their morning's work.

Scarcely had Heseltine distanced his pursuers on the near side of the drain, than the reiterated blasts of the trumpet announced the close arrival of the general,

and Ellerton had hardly dressed his men, when he stood before them. He was a man about the middle height, but whose breadth of figure, while it made him look lower than he really was, added much to the imposing appearance of its power. His countenance large, swarthy, and vulgar, had a dark redness upon it, which added much to the forbiddingness of his aspect, but his forehead was high and ample, and there was in his large, dark, piercing eye an intelligence which spoke at once to the spirit, and said, that disguise was hopeless, while there sat a decision and an energy brooding over his whole visage, that told of a spirit that was not heedlessly to be brooked, and that would as firmly execute as it could boldly plan.

Apparently regardless of finery, there was yet an evident study of cleanliness in his whole appearance. His garments were badly made, and worse in fit and design, but the light hauberk which he wore was faultless in its polish, and evidently ex-

quisite in temper. A deep red baldrick, embossed with waving edges of gold, which, without being fine, was exceedingly rich in appearance, sustained a straight, heavy broadsword. The horse which he rode was a stout black, without a spot, and of the noblest breed, and as he occasionally raised first one foot, and then the other, to indicate his impatience, every movement, showed the firmness of his action. A small escort of carabineers attended him, with two or three officers of rank, who seemed to bow rather to the intellectual superiority than to the higher rank of their leader.

Captain Ellerton saluted, and presented his report, which the other took without speaking, and then casting his eyes over the prisoners, he enquired who they were.

"The royalist officers whom we took the other day, near Chingford, General."

"And what means this, Master Ellerton, which I saw, as I came up, a couple of men fleeing as if their lives were in danger;

and the greatest monarch in the world. "What!" he exclaimed, almost leaping out of his saddle. "In God's truth, sir, this must be answered for. Have the despatches been recovered?"

"They have not, General," said Ellerton, with infinite vexation in his countenance, and with every submission of deportment, but without the slightest appearance of humility.

"Then look you, Master Ellerton, it may not be long before you dangle higher by the neck than your heels will sustain you."

"As you please," said the other doggedly. "Let those answer who are liable for the fault. I took every care of the man."

"Which is evident by his escape," returned the General. "How came it about, sir?"

"This good gentleman was making a charge against him of robbery at the time of your approach, when, by some means,

the guard suffered him to slip from their hands, and leaping upon the horse that stood by him, he made off."

"That I will forgive the knave," said Cromwell, evidently struck with admiration for skill in an art in which he himself excelled. "That I will forgive him; for he knows a good horse, and how to use him; but this good gentleman, who is he?"

"A cloth-merchant from Bristol," honoured sir," returned Trenton, with admirable self-composure, as he bent before an eye that seemed to search his soul.

"Thy back is wonderfully straight for a cloth waistcoat, my friend. I could have sworn that thou hadst known more of the sword than the yard measure. Hast thou a love for the covenant?"

"Truly honoured sir," said Trenton with a lower obeisance than before, or Master Fiennes would never have given his own safety pass."

"Where is that pass?"

This was a query which Trenton would gladly avoid, for he began to feel the inquisitive eye, that was perusing his countenance, almost more than his patience could support, and he gladly, therefore, turned over the reply to his new acquaintance Captain Ellerton.

With the result of the question Cromwell appeared to be satisfied, and turned to the troopers who, with trembling limbs, awaited his behest. He cared for no form of trial; they were stripped of their arms and accoutrements and placed before him. To every entreaty for mercy he turned a deaf ear. He merely inquired whether they were the guard over the prisoner who escaped.

"We are! But, oh, have mercy, General."

"Mercy! Yes, I will have mercy. You shall die a soldier's death. Captain Ellerton turn out your detachment."

"I pray you, honoured sir," interrupted

Daubigny, hardly able to retain his assured character with composure, and feeling for the fate of the two men, even more than he trembled for his own.

"Silence, sir, and look to your own affairs, or I will put you into their place. I much misdoubt that smooth face of yours."

Trenton bowed with indignation, but to answer would have been madness. Palser, Power, and Maclachlan, looked on with downcast countenances, and accustomed as they were to brave death in the field, they could not behold his work here with all the coolness that was necessary for their own safety, and that of their friend.

With an air of sullen obedience the sergeant of the guard, whose business it was to fulfil the melancholy duty, took their places. The two poor fellows suffered themselves to be bound with their belts without a struggle. Once, only, did one of them

turn an imploring eye upon the countenance of the General; but that face was as dark and impassable as the grave, and no sign of pity answered the earnest glance. No hope remained, not a spark of compassion seemed to glow within his breast, but as unmoved as if he had been about to see the range of a new musket, or inspect the drill of a recruit, did he look upon those few brief yet dreadful preparations.

At about a foot from each other eight of the troopers were ranged in a row slightly bent, while at the distance of three paces were placed the unfortunate culprits, now divested of every ensignia of their calling. Across the eyes of the younger of the two a white handkerchief was tied, but the other indignantly refused any hindrance that would prevent him from looking on his death, and eyed his slayers with an air of as much quietude as if he feared no harm from their balls. A slight frown settled upon his countenance, as though he con-

temned the injustice that thus marked his doom. To the brave the bitterness of death is always passed.

Ellerton could hardly subdue his impatience, but chafed, and unhappy, hastily trod backwards and forwards behind his troop. With his eyes brimming with tears, the serjeant turned his back upon the comrades whose blood he was thus obliged to shed. "Make ready! present!" and at the word of command the deadly barrels were levelled. In an instant after there was a flash, a smoke, a report, and the bodies that were but now animate with life, and flushing with health, lay as helpless as the clod upon which they fell. They appeared to have fallen in amity, for when their fellow soldiers took them up, with hearts bent by sorrow, to place them in their last receptacle, they were found in a half embrace, lying across each other's breast.

The general waited only to witness the execution of his orders, and then riding

rapidly forward, was speedily lost on the road to Reading, the white plume that graced his hat being last distinguishable beneath the bright sunlight by which it was reflected.

Ellerton only waited until General Cromwell was out of bearing to dress his men with little ceremony, but much sorrow. A grave was hastily scooped under the lea of the hill, in which the bodies of their comrades were deposited. Another shallow trench received all that was left of his late lieutenant, who wrapped in his military cloak received a soldier's burial.

The little troop then, shorn of its numbers, was quickly in readiness to proceed, and Ellerton was about to march off without any recognition of the cloth merchant, when Trenton requested the loan of one of the horses.

"Take them both and be damned to you," said the Captain; and without further parley, having seen that his prisoners were at this time at least safe moved off

the ground; whilst the royalist officers whom he escorted, not daring any other farewell, bid Daubigny a silent adieu with eyes.

To take both the horses suited neither Trenton's desire or convenience, and therefore choosing the stronger of the two chargers, he handed the other to the care of a trooper as he passed; and having ascertained which way the detachment took, for the present chose the opposite road. The success of his plan had indeed been beyond his utmost expectation, though the bloody conclusion of the little drama grieved him deeply.

For this, however, as a soldier he felt no responsibility. He had only sought to save the life of his follower, and expected little as he desired to sacrifice those of others in the attempt. It was with a heavy heart, however, that he took the road to join his two dependents, with whose movements he was, of course, totally unacquainted, but shaking off his despon-

dency, he took a circuitous route to the place where he had watched them disappear from the open ground, conceiving that as Metcalfe would be unable, long together, to sustain the pace at which they had fled, Heseltine, on whose firmness and presence of mind he knew he could rely, would pull up as soon as he conceived himself beyond the reach of immediate danger.

Soon, therefore, as the party of parliament soldiers had disappeared round the height, he dismounted, and threading his way through a clump of ash trees he put their shelter between himself and his enemies; then hastily resuming the saddle sped at a rapid pace round the open flat keeping as much as possible the shade of the trees over him. In a short time he gained such a position that he could perceive the body under Ellerton, far off towards the west, and every minute increasing the distance between them.

After another half hour he attained, as he conceived, the knoll of trees among

which he had seen the two men disappear; and, after a little search, discovered the place where, as was evident from the trampled grass, both the horses and riders had rested. Having satisfied himself that such was the case, he looked diligently round for some indication, which he was confident Heseltine would leave for him, as was their custom in days when their time was occupied in the peaceful, but exhilarating, pursuits of the chace, instead of the nobler, but less agreeable, occupation of war.

In this expectation he was not disappointed; for, after a short search, he discovered a scrap of a belt, on which was traced in rude characters with the point of a knife, "The Oak Tree Wokingham." This was an intimation sufficient; but, on looking round, he had some little difficulty in deciding in what direction to turn his steps, and was satisfied that he had at least twenty miles of ground to traverse before he could reach the place. The day was already far spent, and he had endured much

fatigue and anxiety, but Trenton Daubigny was not one to despair at difficulties; and, with a prayer for God's protection and blessing, he nerved himself for the rest of his day's journey.

## CHAPTER IX.

"Life! What is it? a fitful dream,
Where things are not as one would think they seem,
The varying of the glowering light,
That plays at even round some antique room,
Shadows that may rest or flicker in the night,
Dispersed with happier thoughts in morning's light."

It was with no small satisfaction that Trenton Daubigny discovered the anticipated trace of the course which Heseltine and his eccentric, but faithful companion had taken. His mind was at once relieved from much doubt and apprehension, and received an impetus just at the moment it was most needed.

The endurance of fearful peril is a trial even to the strongest, but to the good, as well as the brave man, the result is always a greater tension of the nerves for new trials, and a renewed determination to persevere in the path of right. Yet the very nearness of death or overwhelming misfortune, even with the most confident and decided beings, brings with it such an intimation of the slight tenure on which life is held, that the strongest mind cannot fail to feel its depressing effects. Trenton, therefore, was glad of a few moments solitary repose to rest and refresh himself. The long ride he had had since the morning, and the narrow escape by which he had avoided capture, rendered an opportunity to collect his thoughts, both welcome and necessary; and narrowly scanning the neighbouring jungle, for such it might be called, to see that no enemy lurked within its depths, he prepared to bestow himself for rest. The survey was satisfactory and flinging himself at the foot of a lofty elm,

he suffered his steed to gallop the sward to the extent of his tether, and occupied the time in an endeavour to escape from the anxieties and cares by which he was oppressed.

It was a spot fit for the description of a poet's pen, or the abode of a Nature's child. A little green knoll, elevated some twenty-five or thirty inches above the level sward around, was skirted by the trunks of several lofty birch trees and venerable elms—over whose heads ages had rolled, and which bent in towering beauty far above. Before him lay the plain, round which he had passed, stretching for miles with its undulating aspect and variety; here and there an ash newly planted, and a number of ancient thorns. Around was a thicket of mingled stems, fit already for the woodman's axe, the bright green turf carpeting the ground over their largest roots; while a little within the entrance, the underwood grew so thickly that the place was apparently impervious.

A bubbling brook, the origin of one of those many streams which find the Thames, ran within a foot of the spot where Daubigny was lying, giving alively cheerfulness to the place, by its tranquil music, which soothed, whilst it elevated, the heart.

Upon the margin of the little streamlet the herbage was still green and fresh as when spring, with her rosy fingers, had passed through this, her favourite demesne, and called the wild flowers from their wintry sleep. But above, around, each leaf had got its tinge of beautiful decay, and contributed its rich hues to the mass of varied colouring, as it threw back the sparkling of an autumnal sun. The whortleberries, the bilberries and hips contributed their deep red, and the haws their bright scarlet to the many tinges of the forest leaves while the blackberry and the sloe added their deep purple to contrast with, and set off, the more brilliant colours around.

Before him, stretched the undulating mead, over which Heseltine and his awk-

ward, but faithful, companion, had previously passed. The fast declining sun was throwing its slanting, but still glittering, beams over its wide extent, bringing its rounded risings into bright relief by their golden splendour and its several hillocks into strong contrast with the darker grass on which their shadows fell; while the leaves of the solitary trees which were scattered over the plain, and the waving blades of rank grass, which grew at the bases of these trifling risings threw back their reflections in minute streams, as from ten thousand times ten thousand mirrors, till the eye was dazzled and oppressed by their twinklings as the breeze every moment altered their position.

In the distance the range of hills over which he had passed, was assuming the softened purple with here and there a streak of crimson or gold as a cloud rested upon its heights, or an upland broke through the haze, and still bathed its lofty brow in the glad sunlight, while, far off to his right where the plain gradually narrowed

until the hills on both sides closed in, and left apparently only a pass between them, the full stream of brilliancy still poured an uninterrupted tide, serving to show to Trenton the slightest object that could emerge from the cleft.

This opening he had watched during the whole of the afternoon, for his experience told him that this frequent moving of troops, in small bodies, was a correct indication of the neighbourhood of a larger force, and he rightly anticipated the frequency of communication between its several commanders, would render that way more dangerous, which was sufficiently beset with perils before. How frequently did he applaud the ready wit of Metcalfe, which had saved them not only from such immediate mischief, but had in all probability averted the suspicion which would have been fraught with such unpleasant consequences.

Nothing, however, had disturbed the tranquillity of the landscape for some hours, and he was beginning to congratulate himself upon the supposi-

tion that he had seen the last of the enemy for that day at least, when a dark speck loomed upon the pathway to the west, as the sun was somewhat shorn of its brightness by the rising mist, threw its almost horizontal rays round the gorge. The object enlarged and enlarged till its shadow seemed to occupy almost a third of the plain in its gigantic dimensions. Daubigny could not for some little time perceive the real size or nature of the substance by which the shade was thrown, and was inclined to suppose it to be only a train of waggons or pack-horses, transporting merchandise from place to place under the pass of some parliamentary or royalist officer. Upon this, however, his doubts were soon removed, as, after merging from the cleft, the mass opened and the sudden gleam of arms above the opaqueness of the body, showed him that it was a dense phalanx of infantry winged by flying squadrons of horse.

The troops had evidently deployed either in expectation of an enemy, or of conjunc-

tion with allies, for as they advanced on the plain they marched in battle array. In a short time the cavalry separated from the main body, leaving only a few files as escort or messengers on either hand, and scoured the open ground up to the very trees by which it was skirted on both sides. From time to time they rejoined the main body, which was advancing steadily across the plain by the road on which their friends had passed in the morning. At length they appeared to rejoin altogether, and the little army immediately fell by threes or fours into a column of march, with a space between each division having two great guns, which Daubigny for the first time perceived, in the centre. The cavalry formed their advanced and rear guard.

From the space they occupied, Trenton calculated that there could not be less than from a thousand to twelve hundred men, and he was endeavouring to devise their destination, and admiring their soldier-like

and martial appearance, when he was in an instant startled to his feet. A low sound as of very distant thunder struck his ear, which gradually and rapidly grew till it developed itself into the heavy tread of a number of horse. Trenton immediately perceived the mistake he had made; a picquet had evidently been ordered to scour the fringe of forest trees the whole way, and the next moment told him he was right. He had hardly time to throw himself behind the trunk of a tree, before a number of troopers turned upon the little esplanade. To move would have been certain death or capture, and Trenton stood with a beating heart, as he waited with one foot resting upon a fork of the tree upon which he sprang as the two officers by whom the little party was headed, dismounted from their steeds, and threw themselves on the mound on which only a few seconds before he had himself reclined. The branches fortunately stood out as effectually to con-

ceal him from hasty or unsuspicious inspection, while he soon perceived that he had ample reason to congratulate himself on the change of position which he had taken.

"Ellerton, my boy," said the younger of the two, rising from his recumbent position "this is a nice little spot is it not."

"Aye, just the place for a snooze."

"Yet—but snoozing won't do now, you know. We were ordered to scour every clump."

"Well, am I not scouring the clump. What would you have me do. They should not have sent me."

"Nor would they, I suppose, if they did not conceive that you would know him better than anybody else."

"I only saw him for once in my life, and that was for half-an-hour this morning, though certainly he was not a fellow whose thews and sinews were likely to be forgotten. I told old long nose he was sure to be away long enough before this."

"He did not think so, and at any rate we might try a shot or two to prove our zeal."

"Just as you please, my hearty. You are just as likely to get shot yourself for disobedience of orders."

"That is not likely. You know Sir Arthur talks of scouring the country the whole night, for he is determined to have him. That southren Derivale seems to be moving heaven and earth to prevent his joining the King. And as I presume you would not particularly approve of a bivouac on the grass here with a little biscuit and water for your supper and breakfast instead of the roaring cheer of the Roebuck at Reading. I opine that the more we can convince the better, and I will even endeavour to convince the old fellow that the fox is off. So here goes—What shall I hit?"

"Hit what you like."

"Then here goes at the bird upon the lowest bough of that second tree."

"Fire away!" said Ellerton, somewhat

roused by curiosity to see the success of his lieutenant's shot.

"Well, here goes then. I'll touch this tree and kill that bird."

He took a deliberate aim, and it was not without reason that he was inclined to boast of his skill. Trenton felt that momentary impulse which men who excel in any exercise or accomplishment always feel to witness the attempt of another who possesses it, and was about to look round the stem behind which he was hid. But a prudential thought immediately restrained him, and well was it that he did so, for his days would have been numbered. His eyelids were hardly drawn from the surprise of the flash when he felt his cheek grazed by a splinter of bark, and the blood trickled down upon his collar. He could not refrain from turning his head to witness the result of the shot. The twig on which the bird had sat was whirling its way slowly to the ground, while the little creature was laboriously and vainly endeavouring to stay itself

in the air with one of its wings shorn of half the feathers, and it soon fell fluttering sideways to the ground at the distance of a few yards, while a heavy plunging and scrambling through the brambles told him that the report had frightened his horse which was hastening across the plain on the other side of the thicket.

"Well done, Master Greenlaw!" exclaimed Ellerton, laughing. "If you have not killed the bird you have frightened a cow."

"If I did not kill it, I hit it, Captain Ellerton," returned the lieutenant, annoyed at missing the prize which he had anticipated and which he really deserved. "And I can hit a larger mark than that whenever there is nothing to prevent it."

"Come, Greenlaw, no nonsense," returned his superior, as his anger began to rise. But a blast of the trumpet recalled the troopers to the main body, which rapidly rode off as Ellerton, whose martial and undaunted courage was tempered by a

good nature which made him a general favourite in his corps said, "I shall have to tell old Ironsides some lie about that confounded shot."

Trenton waited until the detachment was close in with their comrades before he descended from the body of the tree which had afforded him such a friendly shelter.

"A very decent marksman, that fellow. I have no particular wish, Master Greenlaw, to be within a few feet of your pistol, I assure you, unless there be a tree between us, or I can have the satisfaction of returning the compliment. All I can say is, that if you have many friends as well skilled as yourself with the pistol, the Roundheads have amazingly improved of late. Oh, you are moving off—to that I have not the slightest objection. Now for my steed."

As Trenton turned to look for his horse the Parliamentarian troops resumed their march and moving steadily on their way, were speedily lost behind the height where Ellerton had rested in the morning.

Daubigny possessed, in an eminent degree, the faculty of devoting his mind to only one subject at a time, and, however harassing or difficult might be the circumstances under which he was placed, the object which it was his purpose to accomplish always took precedence of every other. Indeed the power of abstraction was with him as complete as it possibly could be. He had found from experience that, in the midst of surrounding dangers which threatened from various quarters, and in various ways, the prime consideration was to adopt the most prudent line of conduct, and then trust the result to that Providence whose eyes are over all His works, and who can as well shelter the head amid the tumult of battle, or protect the frame from the pestilence that walketh at noon-day, as shield either in the quiet security of cottage retirement.

In this quality the young soldier possessed no small advantage, for it not only saved him from that enervating fever which must arise even to the strongest nerves by

the continual perception of danger and mishap, but he retained the full strength of his powers to accomplish the object which he sought, and had the opportunity of pressing on to it without being entangled or hindered by the several collateral circumstances which are always ready to stay our progress towards anything which we desire to attain.

For awhile, then, he looked round to see if there would be any pursuit, and when, after waiting a few minutes, he perceived that there was no probability of any more scouts being detached he turned steadily, and with his whole attention to the prosecution of his journey. He was for sometime unsuccessful in the discovery of his horse. His ear had told him which way the poor animal had taken, and well was it for Trenton he had taken the course he did, as Ellerton's recognition of the steed would to a certainty have been a discovery of the rider also. At his first brush he had evidently floundered in the little

morass occasioned by the stagnating waters of the spring which enriched the roots of the copse in which Trenton had found shelter, and this little circumstance had induced the Roundhead officer to suppose that it was a different creature than a trooper's horse, the supposition of which must also have led to further inquiry.

"Another of those instances of the care of Almighty goodness to which I am indebted for preservation," murmured Daubigny, as he followed the horse's foot-marks through the rank grass, "and which we are so apt to describe by the term blind chance."

For a short space he lost the track, but again recovered it, and soon found the scared animal, with the bridle entangled by the topmost twigs of a bush, quietly feeding on the wild pasture land. These two circumstances indicated his training, for on trying him at an open burn Trenton with joy discovered that he must have been lately impressed into the service of war,

and still retained all the habits and education of a hunter.

The light had so much decreased that he could barely discover the colour of the bridle, and he had not proceeded many steps before he found it necessary to seek some more marked track than any which the open prairie, that he was now traversing, seemed to afford. None, however, presented itself, and as the grass gradually assumed a darker hue the umbrageous branches of the lofty forest trees, by which the place was thickly studded, every minute shut out the little twilight that lingered like a streak of happiness in the west, he turned his eyes to the stars which were rapidly breaking into the blue vault above, for information as to the course he was pursuing.

To ascertain this with such assistance was no every difficult matter, but the rightness of the direction was not so easily decided, and after riding for nearly an hour without seeing or hearing anything that

could indicate the presence of a human being, he pulled up in a state of complete perplexity. To remain where he was for the night was neither agreeable nor safe. To proceed might be equally dangerous. In vain for a time he listened. The slow rustle of the leaves, as they moved heavily under the influence of the slight breeze, the short quick mirp of the grass as his horse, bending from his complying hand, cropped a mouthful, or the rolling munch of the food as it was masticated between his huge grinders, and the occasional chirp of a bird as it momentarily moved in its nest, were all the sounds that broke the stillness of this deserted region, and promised little for the rest for which he longed, and the food which he now began cravingly to require.

"A bivouac in the damp grass is not particularly pleasant," said Daubigny, to himself, after a long ride. "I wish Master Heseltine had left me some token of the

way I was to take, as well as the place I ought to reach. What shall I do?"

"Proceed!"

Trenton turned in the utmost amazement at the sound of the voice. Not a soul that he could perceive was near him, nor had he seen the trace of any person in his neighbourhood. Nerves which the roar of battle could not shake, and which the urgent danger a few hours before could not, in broad daylight, discompose, when death might be said to stare him in the face, vibrated through every thread. Though above the prevalent belief in supernatural agency which prevailed so much at the period, Trenton could not altogether divest himself of the feeling, however opposed by reason, that there was a cast of truth, about the many well-attested legends which were accredited in the country; and when in the darkness of this solitary place he heard himself addressed by an unknown and unseen communicant, when he believed

himself to be perfectly alone, surprised and overcame his cooler faculties. This with a man of well-ordered mind, like Trenton Daubigny, could not last, and calling his fortitude to his aid, he returned—

"At whose desire?"

"Proceed!" was reiterated, in the same deep tone as before.

"Whither?" again inquired Trenton, anxious to ascertain where his correspondent was concealed.

But it was a vain effort. He heard not a foot-fall, nor could perceive a blade of grass or a twig to move.

"Proceed!" was again reiterated; but, as each time before, the word evidently came from a different spot.

Daubigny knew not which way to turn, and half angry at this continuance of what he perceived to be needless mystery, he said—

"I go not at the bidding of one whom I know not. Whom am I addressing?"

"One who is your friend," returned the voice.

"How can I know that?" answered Trenton.

"By the token," replied the other, "that

'In Normandie a name there is
That will with Daubigny match I wis.'"

The dogrel was part of a legend, and one that, after denouncing love for sorrow, which his mother had frequently repeated to him as an iniquity of a bye-gone member of the family, seemed to point him out as the restorer of his house. The repetition of these two lines intimated the speaker's knowledge of that of which he believed himself to be the sole depositary, and Trenton, excited by curiosity to the utmost pitch, exclaimed—

"Whoever you are, I beseech you meet me face to face."

The wind, as it sighed past his face, was the only answer he obtained, and for several minutes Daubigny stood in anxious but vain expectation.

"Speak, I beseech you," he repeated.

"Proceed!" was again the only reply deigned to him.

For a moment he looked around. The only obstacle between him and a prospect all round that he could perceive was a mass of thorn and brambles, about five feet high; to clear this was the decision of a moment, and reining back his horse a few steps he clapped the spurs to his flanks, and the ready steed rose like a grey-hound.

He had cleared some distance, but such an experience of the possibility of detection as he had just met with, together with the almost certainty that bodies of the enemy were numerous, induced him to halt as soon as any chance of covert presented itself, and consider which would be the

most likely means for safety. A narrow lane leading to some lands enclosed from the surrounding common seemed to promise secresy and opportunity for thought, and he determined to use it. Following the road which was overshadowed by lofty elms, at the end of about two hundred yards he came to its termination. He effected an easy entrance to the enclosure, and turning immediately to the left he tethered his horse by the bridle to a stake in the hedge so as to allow him sufficient liberty to feed, and flung himself beneath the shade of a leafy ash, determined to await the approach of night before he resumed his journey.

The hours passed wearily enough, but at last Trenton joyfully observed the shadows lengthen more and more, and the sun hide his broad red disc behind a distant hill. One by one the stars came out to sprinkle the blue concave with their gentle beauty; and Daubigny with a refreshed frame, and a renewed spirit bestrode his neighing and

prancing steed. But his journey was not destined to end so happily as it begun. He had not reached half down the lane when the jingle of military accoutrements struck his practised ear. The body was evidently numerous whoever they were, but whether friends or foes it was better for Trenton to avoid them.

He had just decided upon lying in wait until the ground should be again clear, when a sentry's challenge was hastily and imperiously made within a few yards of him. He still hoped that they might think themselves mistaken, and accordingly he remained perfectly silent, and reined up his horse, with his hand tightly on the bridle, ready for a spring, in the deeper darkness, under a tree where he thought in the obscurity he might even then pass unobserved.

The challenge was repeated, and still he continued silent. A third time it was unanswered, and a couple of balls severed

the branches on each side of him, one of which struck the horse with such violence as to cause him to start into a gallop. The shots and the start of the horse was the signal for a general fusilade, and Trenton perceived the balls falling thickly around him; he felt that one at least had touched him, though he thought slightly, and he determined to escape, if possible. Already had he passed the lane, and gained the common, and success seemed almost certain, when in endeavouring to pass between two of the men who now were hastening to surround him in great numbers, his horse leapt up with a violent rebound, broke forward, and fell upon his head dead, throwing his rider stunned but not senseless far beyond him. The soldiers had stretched a cord across the road, and the pace at which they were hurrying, had caused the concussion on which they had calculated.

Trenton was hastily raised by two of

his captors ; but his quivering brain was unable to ascertain the circumstances so as to reply to the enquiries which they eagerly put to him. It was sufficient that he was wounded—in disguise—and a prisoner.

## CHAPTER X.

"'Tis dark; I cannot see;
And yet methinks I can spy a friend;
His face is honest—but God is just;
I'll bide the result—do what I can;
And so to sleep."

OLD PLAY.

WHAT passed for some hours after his fall was a mystery which Trenton never could unravel. It was evident to him that a considerable distance had been traversed during his insensibility, for none of the objects past which he had travelled met his eye. The open, well-grassed woodland, with its lofty and branching forests, had

entirely disappeared, and in the place of it a low dell or pit, which had apparently been made in excavating gravel, presented itself to his opening senses. On three of its sides the declination was precipitous, and clothed partially with the bushes of broom and furze, which were still rich with the deep yellow blossoms that looked like drops of gold as they shone in the shadowy light of a huge fire. The other side evidently served as a descent, and was rough with the treading of horses, and the ploughing of the rude wheels which had been used to carry away the produce of the excavation. Above the rise a cluster of huge bushes might be seen, which served to conceal the entrance from the cavern.

Trenton found himself lying on a bed of rushes, spread out on the floor of a little hut, dug out of the wall of the pit, at the entrance to which he could hear the slight gushings of a spring which trickled from about the height of the room in which he lay. The room itself, which could not be

less than eighteen or twenty feet square, was arranged with such a variety of furniture as led to the supposition that its occupiers followed a business not altogether congenial with the spirit of strict justice. Nor did its arrangement evince much more order than principle in the proceedings of the parties who claimed its tenancy. Amid bales of cloth, rolls of silk, pieces of plate and other valuables, conveniently piled together, crossbows, swords, match-locks, pistols, and almost every other sort of war-like weapons and instruments were mingled. A small chafing dish stood by his side, in which the dull embers of burnt wood still glowed, and threw a lurid glare through the chamber, sufficient to indicate its extent, and the nature of its contents, though not strong enough to bring any object sufficiently out of the obscurity for its form and colour to be closely defined.

The most prominent amongst them, at the present moment, was a woman of haggard mien, yet, though approaching to sixty

years of age, still retaining the traces of superior beauty. Beside her sat another, whose every feature wore the stamp of revolting ugliness. In the half gloom of the cave, her complexion assumed the glowing tinge of the dull fire beside which she was cringing. The motion of Daubigny had apparently awakened their attention, for they each came to his bed-side, and taking a hand, first rubbed it strongly, and then poured over it an aromatic liquid. A flask of cordial stood by the side of the younger of his two helpmates, which she occasionally applied to his lips, and the contents of which proved of excellent restorative qualities, for Trenton felt his spirits, indeed, revive within him.

Of the nature of the society into which he had fallen, he felt tolerably certain, but unable to comprehend fully why they took so much care of him, he determined still to feign a state of insensibility, and observe what passed around. He had not lain many minutes before a man of about

the middle height, but whose well-set frame indicated powers of great endurance and activity, bent into the room, and inquired of his nurses how the renovation of their patient proceeded. A moment only was left for Trenton's observation, and that with his eyes half closed, as they replied, that he was amending; but that time sufficed to show a countenance in which rapidity of thought and decision of character were plainly marked. The traces of deep earnestness and energy were equally remarkable; and as he turned from the entrance to the cave, Trenton perceived a light cuirass of elegant workmanship gleam between the open vest attached to his braided surcoat of Lincoln green, and that a whistle, apparently of silver, hung round his neck. A gleam of satisfaction crossed his countenance as he heard their report.

Beyond the cave, around a large fire which threw its wild and flickering flames high in the air, sat a group of sixteen or eighteen athletic men, whose wild and uncouth

visages, mostly matted with dark hair, indicated their unlawful profession. Dispensing with the table, they were sitting or lying on the ground, with their drinking cups before them, indulging in that revelry which alone can aid men to despise the danger and disrepute of a business, the reward of which consists in that unrestrained joviality which is made a substitute for almost every other pleasure of intercourse. Trenton thought he had seldom seen a set of more daring countenances, or frames more fitted to pass through a battle or the field of fight; and, as with the first glance of a soldier, he perceived their capability for warfare, so did he long to lead them on the cause of justice and patriotism, in the service of his honoured master.

Catching the spirit of gaiety that floated over their meeting, the laugh, the jest, and the wine, moved quickly as the draughts of the bright spirit which impelled their mirth, and with a brilliancy which showed the con-

gregation of outcasts to be no common horde of plundering villains. Here and there lay a member of the party talking softly to the dark-eyed mistress of his devotions—for property seemed to be a peculiarity of the band—and each retained the share of his booty for his own peculiar benefit. This Trenton had learned, from the labels of a number of names which hung up in different parts of the cave near his couch, while small conical tents, lighted by the fire, and constructed by two or three crossed poles, covered by a blanket, showed the existence of a degree of order in the conduct of the society, which few would have expected.

Apart from the main group, sat two or three women, who only partook in the revelry by observation and ministering to the wants of their lords—few of whom issued their commands with much of gentleness or courtesy.

To approve of their conduct was impos-

sible, yet there was an air of freedom and sincerity about those sons of the heath and the hill, the forest, and the field, which Trenton could not but admire. But, if he could not restrain his feelings for the external developments of character among the men, he felt still less inclined to withhold his respect for their leader.

The momentary glance which he obtained of this man, as he inquired after his recovery, had, in spite of the injury which he supposed he had himself received at the hands of his band, prepossessed Daubigny much in his favour, and the feeling was not a little increased as he contemplated him, leaning against the sides of the hut partly participating in, and partly controlling, the uproarious mirth of his companions. From time to time, a smile crossed his countenance as he responded to the jests of his followers, or wished them a health as he partook of the liquor which they earnestly pressed upon him. For the most part, however, an air of sadness rested on his really

handsome features ; and, he indulged in the luxury of seeking the weed which had then been lately introduced, and the fragrant wreath, of which, occasionally, floated to his resting place. Trenton perceived that the sorrow deepened, until, eschewing the neighbourhood of his associates, he walked up the declivity that led to the hovel, to avoid their boisterous mirth and exclamations.

With the departure of their leader, the revelry seemed to gain in riot, what it lost in constraint. The lieutenant of the guard, for such Trenton judged him to be by his embroidered belt, who acted as president of the meeting, endeavoured, in vain, to control the mirth which had only been restrained out of respect to their leader.

" Come, you old beldame," cried a dark-browed fellow, whose sallow and ferocious visage exhibited every trait of a confirmed bandit. " Hand us some more eau-de-vie. The young one will never want it."

" Beldame to yourself, ye rip of a black-

guard," returned the woman he addressed —and who, it appeared, was the mother of one of the band who had fallen in a late affray; "and get your liquor where ye can, for ye shall hae none of this. I would sooner give it to the dogs than to such a limb of Satan, as you are."

"None of your jaw here, you old cat," returned the other, "or I'll split your nob with a faggot for ye. Hand us the stuff do ye hear?"

"Go to the Devil and bless yourself, ye old rogue. Ye shall have none of my liquor, I tell you."

This was incitement enough, and seizing a faggot from the blazing mass, the wretch struck at the poor creature with a force that would have placed her out of the pale of humanity, had she not, with an agility that would have been little expected from her years and appearance avoided the blow.

"None of that, Saunders," exclaimed the lieutenant; but, ere he could check the action, a blow from their principal had laid

the man on the earth. He rose slowly from the position in which he had fallen. Not a word passed, but his scowl of rage and malice, was returned with a calm look of defiance and contempt, and he retired from the circle to brood over his insult and revenge.

"Away, my lads," said the president, "with a laugh. Never mind Dick Saunders; we are as well without him as with him. So, Langley, let's have a song."

"Agreed — agreed," cried they all. "Langley, my boy, tip us a stave. Something new. Something about the king and the Parliament, and how old Pym got soused at Guildhall."

"The King and the Parliament," rejoined Langley, with contempt. "I'll give you something better than that. So now, my merry men all, remember the chorus."

"Never heed that, lad, we'll stick to that. So away with you." And truly did they keep their word, for the place rung again with an uproar that hardly any roof

could have checked, as after an excellent cadence, in which the rich manly voices of two or three of the best of the band had aided the singer in his effort, they renewed the chorus at the end of each verse, creating a wild harmony that stimulated Daubigny's enterprising spirit to the utmost. With little prelude, the singer commenced in an uncultivated but rich and mellow voice, a distich to the following effect:

Under the shade of the greenwood tree,
We free men live right merrily;
The lark sings high and free in the air,
But he 's not more free than we are there;
The thrush's note is gay to be heard,
And sweet is the song of the lone night bird;
But not more gay when on the green mead,
Our feast of venison store is spread;
Nor sweeter yet is the night bird's song,
Than our roundelay the wood boughs among.

Then merrily trowl the roundelay—the roundelay—
the roundelay.
Then merrily trowl the roundelay, for this is St.
Nicholas' holiday.

The castle hall with splendour is dight,
But 'tis not so brave as the soft moonlight;
The lady's bower is pleasant to see,
Perfumed with spices from Araby;
But not so witching sweet is it made,
As the mountain breeze in the greenwood shade,
For there doth the gale blow wild and free,
Where we freemen live full merrily;
For rich and free and noble are we,
When we merrily trowl the catch and glee.

Then merrily trowl the roundelay—the roundelay—
the roundelay,
Then merrily trowl the roundelay, for this is St
Nicholas' holiday.

An uproar of applause followed this attempt, and for a while no abatement of their mirth appeared; but the heavy eyes and the sleepy answers of the party began at length to show the usual effects of fatigue and revelry. One by one they dosed off, until those who had partners, and those who had not portioned out nooks for themselves, the flickering flames of the expiring fire, as they occasionally shot up above the glowing embers, lighting up the powerful figures of

the freebooters in a thousand fantastic ways, and giving to them gigantic proportions, which made them look even more fearful when at rest than they did when in action. Twoor three of the women only, who sat crouching near the fire, gave sign of life, and these soon sunk into an almost death-like silence.

What course to pursue Trenton knew not. The cause of his detention, he could not perceive, unless plunder had been their aim; and he had too little treasure about him to tempt their rapacity. Whether the thought of adding another member to their band was their motive, he could not guess; but as he surveyed his own, powerful and well-knit frame, he thought that must have been their object; and yet he could not help coupling the request he had heard to proceed with the wild rangers in whose power he lay. Whatever, however, had been the reason of his captivity, he did not feel, at all, called upon to assent to it, and as he first looked

upon the sleeping group without, and then contemplated the gaping couple within, he thought that now was the time to attempt an escape. Having come to this decision, he was not long in putting the design into execution, and raising himself silently on his elbow, surveyed the apartment to look for a weapon. The endeavour convinced him how severely he had suffered by the fall, for every joint in his system seemed racked with pain as he moved. Such an obstacle did not daunt him. He knew how severe is always the first attempt at motion after a position long kept by constraint, and he thought that a little exercise would again supply their usual suppleness to his stiffened limbs. Determined then to make the attempt, he was about to start towards a naked cutlass, which he espied, by its faint gleam, at a few feet from his head, when the leader of the party entered, with a noiseless step, completely armed.

He looked around, and having ascer-

tained that the crones, who had attended him, were asleep, he placed his finger on his lips, and motioned his prisoner to follow him. Daubigny waited for no second intimation, but rising as cautiously from his couch as he could, trod in the footsteps of his guide. A sign told him to be as wary as possible in passing the groups of bandits or guerillas, whichever they might be called; and as he surveyed their powerful and gaunt frames—their fierce and hardy countenances, each with a weapon in his hand, or lying by his side, he fully apprehended the prudence of the injunction; and though a man of undaunted courage, he could not repress a thrill of fear as he estimated the odds against him, should a touch of his foot, or the slightest stumble, awaken any of the group as he threaded his way, with care, between the bodies and among the limbs of the sleepers, now perceptible in the lurid glow of the expiring fire.

For a moment or two, they made their way up the steep ascent; but suddenly his

guide came to a stand-still, and seized the arm of Trenton with a grasp which, notwithstanding his size and weight, brought him instantly and involuntarily to a crouching posture behind a huge furze bush.

"Be silent," he whispered in the ear of Daubigny; and they both lay as still as the sand heap which rose above their heads.

The necessity for caution was explained by the appearance of four or five men bearing weighty packages, and headed by two others, whose accoutrements indicated their superiority to the servile labour of their companions; and what was Trenton's astonishment when, as they passed within a couple of feet of his hiding-place, he recognised the attire of one of the most redoubted corps in the rebel service.

"That fellow, my lieutenant, hates me as he hates the devil," said the stranger guide, "and that is the surety for your safety. He ought, immediately on his ar-

rival, to make his report to me; but that I know he will retain till to-morrow morning. Be quick, however, and follow me, for he will in all probability set a fresh watch instead of the slight one which I have posted on your account. I see he has already left one at the entrance to our retreat, so that we must change our plans. Can you climb?"

"Anywhere," replied Trenton, in the same undertone; "but I am now stiff."

"You must disregard that for a while, but hold fast, for the ascent, though not lofty, is high enough to break your neck, and sufficiently awkward. Press firmly with your feet, and follow me. Discovery now would most likely be death to us both; but no one knows of this pathway but myself. First, however, take these; they will serve, for a short time, if necessary. Now come on—lift your feet clean, and set them down flat till you mount the rise."

Daubigny entertained no doubts upon the subject, and thrusting the pistol and

poniard which his friend, for he could not but esteem him such, handed to him, into his girdle, he peered through the darkness, and seizing fast hold of the furze which grew on either hand, and which appeared to have been left as if on purpose to assist in the ascent, kept as closely behind his guide as the free lifting of his feet would allow him. Their way led up the almost perpendicular side of the pit by little stepping places, barely large enough to plant the toes in, and so small, and at such irregular distances, as to be unobservable from below, and little likely to be suspected by one unacquainted with the path. Trenton found full use for all his remarkable agility, for his guide, equal, if not superior, to him in this accomplishment, was well acquainted with the path, and made way with such celerity, that he was often almost out of sight, and was only faintly distinguishable by his feet as they just appeared moving in the air above Daubigny's head, and left the latter fre-

quently in doubt as to the right spots for placing his own. Once or twice he slipped, and but for the determation with which he clung to his frail support, and the great muscular strength he was enabled to exert, must have fallen to the bottom. At length, they stood upon a narrow ledge, only a few inches broad, while the summit of the precipice was still about the same space above their heads.

"This I call my landing net," said the bandit, "for I am obliged to hide the last few steps the most difficult of all to ward suspicion."

Trenton was not sorry for a little breathing time, for the ascent had been most fatiguing; and as he looked down into what now appeared to him a deep abyss, he was able to estimate the depth as little less than from fifty to sixty feet, as far as he could perceive, by the fire which the new comers had revived, and round which they sat discussing sundry viands and the con-

tents of a couple of flasks, of which, to judge of their assiduity, they highly approved. They had evidently wound nearly half round the pit, and now stood directly above the group below. Daubigny was probably one of the most athletic men that ever lived, and accustomed to all the violent exercises by which the physical powers are developed and trained; but as he looked around, he thought that this was an exploit he would not like to repeat every day, and imagined that it was one that only a desperate position would urge him to attempt at all.

"Use, my good sir—all use," said his guide, in reply to an observation to this effect, "I found this little journey necessary to my convenience and, perhaps, safety, and it is astonishing how necessity facilitates custom, and how custom reconciles us to danger. But this is not the time to moralise, for I see the morning star is already high above the horizon, and before sunrise I must be again in my lair."

With these words he sprang up and planting his foot in a niche at an easy height above the little platform, and placing his hands on the level ground above, was in the next instant standing upon the summit. Daubigny followed his example, not without some apprehension of failure, and consequent destruction ; but he found that the place had been made with nice consideration, and put just at that level which was easiest of attainment; and with less difficulty than he anticipated he stood beside his guide.

Little time was left for parley; as Trenton was about to express his gratitude for the help he had received, he was interrupted.

"Avoid that fellow to your left," said the bandit, pointing to a sentinel, crouching among the broom. "He is as deaf as a beetle, and as dull as a coulter ; I put him there on purpose. But when he does fasten, he is like a bull dog, he never leaves his hold."

At this caution Trenton kept close by

the side of his leader, and for some minutes they held their course across an open common, which he perceived spread out for some miles on every side. The ground was undulating and intersected by small ravines and deep hollows, which every now and then obliged them to make small detours, and after the space of that time they came to a brook some three or four feet wide, beyond which the land had been partially reclaimed into patches of pasture land. At length the profitable ground began so to grow upon the waste that the tracts of unproductive soil became rare, and after a quarter of an hour's further walk they came to a couple of large thorn trees, to one of which Trenton gladly perceived his horse, with another, was tied.

At the distance of a couple of hundred yards was a low mud cottage, surrounded by a small garden, which was watered by a whimpling burn, and altogether the place was remarkably contrasted with the surrounding objects.

"There," said the bandit, directing Trenton's attention to it as its features became plainly perceptible in the rising dawn, and as they mounted their horses, "you will hear of me if ever you want my assistance. They know me by the name of Pierce Johnson. Now, however, we must be quick, we have lost time in our walk; but I could not bring the horses nearer for fear of their footsteps being heard in the retreat.

So saying, he led off at a smart pace, along a trackway which had been beaten by the greater passing of the farming wains, and Trenton perceiving that his guide did not chose to be questioned, or to suffer any more conversation than was absolutely necessary, conceived himself bound to follow his will, and rode on in silence. After half an hour's course they had left the open lands and had fairly got among the high hedges and fields of a cultivated district, and shortly emerged from the track they had followed upon an open space where three roads met.

"That," said the guide, "is your way; and it will bring you in the course of an hour and a half to the place where your two servants are waiting your arrival."

"But first," returned Trenton, "let me know to whom I am so deeply indebted. I have, for I perceived that you desired it, refrained from speaking hitherto, but I should wish at some future opportunity to return my thanks, for the kindness you have rendered me, in a more appropriate way."

"It boots not, Master Daubigny, to say who I am; what you cannot fail to have seen; and I need not say that I rely on your honour to keep what you have seen a secret. Suffice it for you to know that those who are injuring you have injured me, and that those who have loved you have been of benefit to me, so that you have a double title to my good will. Now we must part, and we may never meet again. The less we do the better, in all probability, for you. Adieu, and may success attend you. The

reason of my conduct you may discover hereafter."

Waving his hand the two separated on their several ways though Trenton could not refrain from looking back, and admiring the gallant and easy carriage of his late companion.

## CHAPTER IX.

'Tis certain, greatness once fallen out with fortune
Must fall out with men too, what the decline is
He shall soon read in the eyes of others,
And feel his own fall.

*Troilius and Cressida.*

Thanks, friend! The way is steep but I will, under God's good providence, I'll help myself.

*Wanderer in Switzerland.*

FEW things tend to degrade a man of brave and noble spirit more, in his own estimation, than the knowledge, that while in the consciousness of power all his faculties have been insufficient to ward off disgrace; that his safety even has been at the mercy of another, and has been secured by the assistance of an individual upon whom he had no claims of kindred or friendship.

Such a circumstance brings the natural feebleness of humanity so strongly before the perception, that the most ingenious casuist is obliged to confess his inability to encounter the storms and disappointments of life unaided. To those independent in character, from the self-knowledge of resources which have always heretofore proved sufficient for their exigencies, whether of a moral or physical nature, any palpable proof of their own insufficiency is especially mortifying.

Trenton Daubigny was a man who had been accustomed, from his youth, to look for assistance from no one for that which he thought he could himself accomplish. His childhood had early initiated him in the principles of self-reliance; for however excellent are the friends he has around him, the orphan cannot but miss that tie which binds parents to children, and children to parents, brothers to sisters, and sisters to brothers, and which seems invariably to invest the members of a family

with an irresistible claim upon the services and affections of each other.

The suddenness with which he had been effectually placed beyond any opportunity of resistance, the previous evening, and his utter inability to help himself during his brief captivity was a severe lesson in humility, which he was not likely to forget, and as he thought over the wants of the previous four-and-twenty hours, he invariably acknowledged the truth of the assertion that "the lot is cast into the lap, but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord." Little did he ever expect to be beholden to such a man as that with whom he had just parted, and while he thought upon the fact he became proportionately anxious for the fortunate fulfilment of the mission with which he had been entrusted.

To this feeling was added another, of curiosity as to the mode by which he had obtained his freedom from a captivity, seldom terminated, he knew, without the payment

of a high price. What could have been the inducement of the captain of the gang to interest himself in the welfare of an individual of whom he could have no personal knowledge, he could not conceive. Yet whether he was, or was not so, remained a doubt, and the scrap of doggerel soothsaying which had been repeated by the individual in question, would remain a secret which he could not fathom. The ballad, whence it was taken he knew not, had been often repeated by his dear mother in those happy days when, a child by her side, he had peered into her beautiful and affectionate countenance, endeavouring to forestal every wish of her heart. He had been led to believe that it was the marriage lay of some lovely heiress of the flock, through whose misadventure their misfortunes had befallen them, and was believed to be known only to the members of the house and their immediate dependents. But who this family was he had been too young to learn, and his parent had held so little intercourse with her neighbours

that none of them were likely to become the depositaries of her secret.

The thought that he was a nameless outcast, and the probability that he would continue so, had often racked his spirit, and he now heartily blamed himself for not questioning the participant in the information more closely than he had done on that point. This, however, was too late, and the only consideration he felt that ought to occupy his mind now, was a care for the urgent business which he had to transact on his arrival in the metropolis.

But Trenton Daubigny was not one to yield to depressing emotions. The varieties of a soldier's life, one day victorious, the next suffering from defeat, imparted an impetus to the natural elasticity of his spirit, and as the fresh breeze of morning blew across his face, new hope and joy rose within to impel him on the course of duty; and he was content to leave to a gracious Providence the development of the mystery which hung over his birth, and thus clear

away one of the main obstacles to his union, as he conceived, with Edith Dornford. At any rate the continuance of the present contest was certain to bring him future promotion, or place him so that he would not require it. Either would be a termination of the cruel doubt in which he was held, and he deemed it none of the wisest things to waste happiness in fruitless regrets.

Thus resolved, he rode on his way with a gayer spirit, and flinging care to the winds, he determined to be less careful of results as to his own fortune, provided he could be successful in his mission. The consequence was a readiness to elicit amusement out of everything that crossed him on the road, and he availed himself of the prospect of society held out by the appearance of an individual, whose upright figure and tall, narrow-crowned hat, joined to his stiffly starched bands, and sober habiliments, indicated him to be one of those puritans, whose zeal, though but little influenced by right knowledge, was yet of so

much power in urging on the members of the league and covenant to deeds of the highest heroism, and kept them often from the impurity of a world that lieth in wickedness, when, perhaps, a more sober piety would not have availed to stem the torrent of passion or rouse the lethargy of languid virtue.

With this view he followed the Divine at a brisker pace. His intention, however, appeared likely to be disappointed, for, after riding a quarter of a mile further, the worthy man turned up to a little hostel on the side of the road, as if to evade the connection. But Daubigny was not to be easily put off, and smiling at the wary caution of the puritan, whose eye he could perceive more than once turned over his shoulder to scan his person, and notice his movements, he followed his example, and with a little malicious pleasantry, turned into the inn.

The surprise and pleasure he experienced were readily responded to by Hesel-

tine and Metcalfe, whom he found sitting over the fire, paying due respect to a large dish of mutton collops, which smoked on the board before them. To the former, the moment was one of ecstatic happiness, and though a glance from Daubigny enforced the prudence of abstaining from any reference to the previous day; the tear that glistened in his eye, and the quivering of his lips, as he hastened to divest his master of his cloak, were signs that unequivocally expressed his gratitude, and found theirecho of good will in the heart of him for whom it was felt.

Such indications did not escape the notice of the buxom landlady, who had found the two men very satisfactory guests, and rightly calculated that there would be no lack of liberality on the part of the master. A feast was accordingly soon placed before Trenton, to which his morning ride supplied an earnest temptation.

"But, my good dame," said the royalist, "do not let me engage the whole of your

attention, this worthy gentleman is doubtless fatigued by his ride as well as myself, and I will e'en wait for further supplies until you have served him."

"Soon enough—soon enough, for the likes of him. What now would you like, worthy sir."

The repeated requests, however, of Trenton, did not seem likely to hurry the supplies to the poor fellow in any remarkable degree, and he accordingly invited him to partake of his own poor fare, an invitation which did not need to be repeated. The appearance of his guest augured no great powers of good fellowship, but the result only showed how deceptive appearances may be, for he commenced in a style that fairly set imitation at defiance. His heart was, at length, opened by the good cheer of which he had partaken, and his lips following the impulse, he forthwith seemed inclined to answer Trenton's original design in seeking his society.

"Journey you to London worthy sir,"

he inquired, after the exhibition of a set of teeth, which would have graced any of the canine race.

"In truth do I, sir," returned Trenton, "If I can but find my way thither."

"Oh, nothing more easy," replied his companion, "I myself am going thither, and will shew you the way. Which road do you like; that by Slough or by Windsor."

"It matters not to me. The easiest and most direct road will suit us best."

"Then must you take that by Slough and Colnbrook. Gladly shall I be your guide. Where would you propose to dine?"

"Indeed," said Trenton, amused by the mention of dinner before breakfast had been dispatched, "that is a matter of too much importance for me to decide upon at once."

"Then would I recommend the Hart at

Colnbrook. They have venison there that would please an emperor ; and I trow, you would find me no bad clerk at the carving-knife. Happy to assist you in any way, and charge you nothing for the trouble. London, sir, I know well, and have a cousin of my mother at the present moment one of the sergeants-at-mace to the honourable House of Commons."

This was an intimation not to be neglected ; and in the hope of eliciting something that might be of service to the royal cause, Trenton determined, notwithstanding the flippancy and lightness of the clerk, to take him for a companion, at least, for the day. But having already had proof of the superior address of Master Metcalfe, he thought it best to turn him over to the care of that worthy as soon as opportunity served.

" Well, sir, I am glad that I havefallen in with a gentleman of your respectability, and we shall, therefore, readily put ourselves

under your guidance till we reach the great town, of which I have heard so much."

"You do me honour. Upon my life you do me honour," answered the clerk, "and I shall readily take charge of you, and you can help me to take care of my carpet bag. Capital plan that. Been sent all the way from Gloucester by Morris, and he gave me a guard far as he could, but they were obliged to leave me at Reading, and I have had to travel all this way by myself, and was so glad to see you."

To this statement Trenton did not give implicit credit. The glances of fear and suspicion which he had observed prior to entering the hostel, had been a proof of anything but pleasure at his appearance, and he conceived the present assumption of carelessness only a blind to conceal his real intentions and feelings. Whether to believe him or not, when he stated that he had been sent by a person of Morris's known decision of character, Trenton was in

doubt, but he was inclined to think that, like most people, this messenger had finessed too far, and he determined, if possible, to ascertain the truth. A few minutes put them on the road, but the plan he had adopted was speedily set aside by the appearance of a traveller of a different caste.

He was a man of five or six and forty years of age, about or below the middle height, but whose plain nicety of appearance answered well to the keen intelligence of his dark, quick and piercing eye. Few men, indeed, could compete with Pere Derivale, in that expression of shrewd rapidity and comprehensiveness of thought with which his countenance was filled. The perfect symmetry of his slight figure, too, gave an opportunity for that faultless adjustment of attire which indicated his decided and well arranged mind.

Accustomed to mix in all grades of society, and to the assumption of a variety of characters, his manners had become divested

of the exclusive and aristocratic air which pertained to his rank, and was natural to his feelings—and they had acquired a facility of adaptation to the inclinations and temperaments of those whom he addressed. When any object was to be attained none were more ready to sacrifice prejudice or peculiarity to temporary expediency—principle he never sacrificed—for his principle consisted in the promotion of the interests of his church, and this allowed such an elasticity of feeling, that the necessity for self-denial seldom occurred. When not actuated by any particular motive, his bearing partook of the tenour of his mind, and was lofty, exclusive and forcible, if not imperious.

On the present occasion he was mounted on a beautiful bay horse, whose light and graceful motion and elegant figure as he bore his rider's light weight at a rapid rate with perfect ease, excited the admiration of Trenton's practised eye. The encounter was

evidently unexpected by the stranger; and, as upon a sudden turn of the road he came upon the Royalist, an expression of surprise and vexation passed quickly across his handsome countenance. The sorry nag of the poor Puritan was crossing the road as the noble animal of Derivale turned the angle at a rapid pace—and it was with considerable difficulty that its rider checked its career. Happily the hero of his own imagination, more ready to talk of danger than to brave it, escaped with an agility that would not have been anticipated from his appearance. The incident, therefore, excited, for the moment, no further comment than a hasty flush of indignation by which the countenance of Daubigny was suffused.

Derivale was too conscious to neglect its dictates, and he apologised earnestly for the error he had nearly committed. The natural rejoinder to which placed them on those terms of incipient acquaintance which two

men of breeding and education, would naturally commence under the circumstances; and which was the more readily entered upon at the the time between those who were professed partisans of either side. Where he had seen him, Trenton could not recollect but he had a positive perception of having scanned that face before. By Heseltine and his boon companion, it was readily remembered; but the different appearance of the person was a sufficient concealment and a hindrance to positive recognition. The signs of mutual knowledge which passed between the new comer and the Puritan, did not escape the quick eyes of the latter.

"Methinks, sir, you travel with a goodly company, and but poorly armed for such a season. The ways are much infested, and the days are fast growing shorter."

"To those who have little to protect, the first evil," returned Trenton, "is but of small magnitude; and to men accustomed to labour all light is alike, and the only dif-

ference between night and day is, that one serves for the following of our proper callings and the other for repose."

'Does Master Daubigny always make his replies with similar candour," returned Derivale.

"I know not," said Trenton, "where you obtained your information; but I feel no inclination to acknowledge every name I hear—nor do I feel called upon to state to every stranger what I call my own."

"Yet would not your father Trenton Daubigny have been afraid to state his at any time."

"My father! What know you of my father?" said the young man, as he looked with astonishment at one who thus professed to be acquainted with that of which he himself was profoundly ignorant.

"Enough to be convinced that he never would have been found on the side of tyranny against freedom, and an opponent of every principle of truth and justice. The

cause you advocate shall be like the figure of Baal brought down upon its face, and its supporters, like the fallen leaves that, driven hither and thither by the breeze, come now flitting across thy path."

"That will never be. But why do you presume that I am a supporter of this cause?"

"There are two reasons why you should not," said the other, as a sneer of contempt settled on his face.

"What are they?"

"Want of inclination and ability," answered Derivale. "But a truce to this bandying of words. It becomes not a man of thy rank and likelihood to be thus thrown away when honour and promotion are calling to thee to come out. This cause that thou supportest, I tell thee, shall sink as a vessel lost amid the breakers, and passes from before the eyes like a dream, till she re-appears upon the surface as a few broken planks which float for a while on the angry

waters and then engulphed for ever. Come out of it and I will lead thee to rank and wealth, and honour, and thou shalt be as a tree transplanted out of a dry rock to a place of rivers of waters."

"Why, look you, sir," returned Trenton, trembling with indignation. I know not who you are, nor whence you came; but you have hinted, this day, at secrets which I could wish well to know. It is possible that you possess the means of gratifying the longing desire I have to become acquainted with my birth. But not all the earth should make me swerve from what I feel to be the path of honour. If the cause which I have embraced, be, indeed, a falling one, the more need is there that its supporters should be true. Go to, sir. You know not the feelings of an honourable man —and are evil as the principles you advocate. I would not trust my patience longer than the moment that is necessary to separate us."

Derivale felt the reproof, and his soul internally added this as another item to the heavy account of hatred which he nurtured against Daubigny. There is in the minds of most men, a repugnance to take that life bestowed on us by an Omnipotent Creator; and the Jesuit would gladly have led Trenton into a labyrinth which must have terminated in his destruction though he hesitated to strike the blow. This, the straightforward honesty of the young royalist evaded, and Derivale was accordingly frustrated; with his eye lowered before the steadfast gaze of Daubigny, he replied,

"Every man knows his own business best, Master Daubigny. My offers of service have been rejected, and as my way separates here, we can each attend to our own affairs. So I bid you good morrow."

So saying, he swerved from the road down one of the many tracks which intersected the country in the neighbourhood of the Metropolis, and was speedily lost to view. After riding for a mile they disco-

vered that the young Puritan had also disappeared.

"The pedlar Tip," said Heseltine, "or I am a Dutchman."

"True as a tatching end, Jem," returned the cobbler.

"If I had been sure of that, I'd have given him a lift; and Master Daubigny would soon have settled his hash. But what's this?" he continued, putting his hand upon a large black parcel which peeped out from beneath the corner of his friend's cloak.

"Oh, only the black leather bag that young fellow was talking about," said Metcalfe, gaily. "He did not seem to know his head from his heels, so I thought I would e'en take care of it for him; and as he was in a violent hurry to follow the old one, I put it on my crupper. I can easily return it you know, the first time we meet."

"To be sure—to be sure, Tip," Heseltine, returned, "that is, if you don't for-

get; I always thought your memory was not a good one."

"Not the the in best world, certainly, Jem; but you know it is not my fault."

"But we had better let Master Daubigny know."

The information gave anything but satisfaction to Trenton, but second thoughts shewed the probability that he might now have in his possession means of doing good service to his royal master. Notwithstanding, therefore, the obvious peril which the retention of the saddle bags imposed he determined to keep them until an investigation of their contents should enable him to judge of their value.

An alteration of his plans became necessary, in consequence of this circumstance, and their arrival in London was deferred until the shades of evening should serve to conceal his movements. To the prudence of this decision Heseltine readily assented, and as possibly, the best means

of evading suspicion, he determined to adopt the suggestion of their quondam companion, and make mine host of the White Hart, at Colnbrook, his master of ceremonies.

## CHAPTER X.

But now behole,
In the quick forge and working-house of thought,
How London doth pour out her citizens!

THE sun had set as Daubigny approached the outskirts of London, and while he was knocking at the postern that the citizens had erected in Holborn, the wind which had been sighing in fitful blasts suddenly came on with violence, then dropped again, and was again raised, bringing with it a shower of pattering rain which

threatened speedily to wet them through. For this the gate-keeper appeared to have as little relish as the travellers, and as he flung back the wicket through which horsemen were admitted, bade them be quick, with an admonition that savoured more of impatience than piety.

The passages of several sumpter horses, belonging, as he understood, to one of the Parliamentarian leaders, detained the travellers for several minutes, when a young man, whom he had observed standing at the entrance of a narrow lane on his left, at the bottom of the hill, stepped up to him.

"You are Master Daubigny, are you not, worthy sir?" he said, in a half whisper.

"Why ask you a stranger's name!" Trenton enquired.

"I come from Master Flockling, and by the description we have had of you by one whom you know, I call you Master Daubigny."

"And supposing you to be right, what then?" said Trenton.

"Master has planted me here these three hours, to advertise you, that you must make your way to the Barbican through Smithfield, and not through the Newgate; and, if you please, sir, follow me, for there are those about with whom you had better not meet."

Trenton did accordingly as he was desired; and, not without taking especial notice of his guide, after crossing the bridge, followed him up a narrow street that wound to the left. It was not without considerable difficulty that he made his way, for the road, steep and piled with large stones, or broken into hollows, made the constant use of hand and rein necessary to enable his horse to keep his foothold, and he could hear the muttered curses of Heseltine, and the lighter denunciations of poor Metcalfe, almost every instant muttered through their teeth, as they went stumbling along.

At length, they emerged from the narrow street upon the open space of Smithfield, where the greater light enabled them

to distinguish a number of people rapidly congregating before the hospital of St. Bartholomew. The boisterous expression of an ungovernable mob occasionally broke out, and while the few minitues elapsed, during which, the travellers waited to allow a band of adherents to pass, who were making their way through the bars from the precincts of Clerkenwell, they had an opportunity of scanning the visages of these rough partizans of peace and loyalty.

The long continuance of the war had so grievously affected the trade of the country, that that class which is generally the last to feel the misery, and farthest removed from the brunt of civil warfare, were now enduring the plague in all its severity. Surge after surge had rolled on upon each other, each overwhelming wave being overtopped by its successor till, breaking through the land-mark, by which its tide had hitherto been confined or restrained, the mighty flood of discord and distress had covered the heights, and was now absolutely

hanging over, and about to sweep down upon the very vales of society. The spirit of proud independence, and almost scorn of the power of their rulers, by which the Londoners had ever been distinguished, urged on by the wild insinuations of those by whom the restless disorder of a few hundred people were used to further their own dark designs, for whose operations the multitudinous population of a great city offered an ample and desirable field, had led them to coalesce readily with the Parliamentary faction in the commencement of their struggle with the King. They took up the cause as one in perfect coincidence with their feelings, and exactly adapted to their prejudices. Every appeal that was made to their understanding, came from persons whom they were ready to acknowledge as champions of freedom, and was strongly backed by their passions. As to the justice on which these appeals were grounded, they took no time for consideration. They conceived only that their own

present interests would be advanced, and the bounds of liberty enlarged, and did not look forward enough to perceive how much suffering must be endured to accomplish their ends, and how surely despotism would result from license. But the dawn of a new day had broken around them. The expectation which had, from the first, been so profusely held out by the Parliament, that the power which they had extorted, by wily diplomacy, from the weakness of the King, would speedily enable them to crush him, by whom it had been given, had proved fallacious. Defeat had followed defeat; restriction had come upon restriction; until circumscribed in their bounds—cut off from their supplies—thwarted of their object—wasted in their means, they felt the success which, from month to month, they had been taught to think was in their grasp, had receded farther than ever, and they began, with the same pertinacity as they had called for war, to clamour for peace.

Already a large crowd had assembled on

the south-west side, and the stream which was pouring past the end of King Street, added greatly to swell its numbers. Above their heads they held a number of torches which served to show the ghastly countenances and tattered garments of the various multitude, and exhibited all the squalidness of the miserable wretches, who hurried on beneath and about them.

A man whose excited, yet ascetic countenance evinced, even more plainly than his long dark cloak, fastened at the throat, his plain garments and straight white collar, that he was of the number of those enthusiasts who, gifted with the power of fluent delivery, without the facility of correct reasoning, to see whither their flight tended, or the discretion to restrain them, was mounted on a cask, surrounded by at least a dozen flambeaux wildly haranguing the people upon their sufferings.

He pointed with his arm to a party at the moment approaching from Clerkenwell, and a cheer of demoniac fierceness greeted

their arrival, which was responded to by a cry of equal energy, and as to the two parties closed, the air was again rent by their unnatural and tumultuous assertions of fealty and good will. Again silence prevailed, and the voice of the orator was heard above the din of the multitude. A few words from the apprentice who had accosted him sufficed to explain to Trenton the cause of the assemblage, and as the expressions of the speaker occasionally fell upon his ear, he could not but acknowledge that the force with which they were uttered, as well as the purport of them was well calculated to rouse all the passions of a mob previously disposed to violence. At length his object was declared to be the demolition of the houses of parliament, and as he went on to enforce his project by cogent arguments, all appealing to their hatred of those above them, and pointing out the probability of spoil, the people began to flourish the various arms with which they were supplied with increased frenzy.

"Let us on my man if you please," said Trenton to the guide.

"I pray you to stay a moment, sir," he replied, "for if I mistake not, another body is coming the way on which we must go."

Trenton was about to object, when Heseltine who had ridden a few paces nearer to the speaker returned and intimated to him that he believed it was Oliver who was thus playing the part of demagogue.

"Impossible," returned Trenton.

"Indeed, but it's true, sir," answered Heseltine.

"Right if you were never right before, Jem," said Metcalfe, who at the moment also returned, "and there is pretty Susan standing by his feet, weeping as if her heart would break, like an angel mourning by Satan."

Daubigny was about to ride amongst the mob in order to induce the poor girl to leave a place so improper for one of her sex and gentleness, when second thought convinced him both of the danger and folly of the attempt, and he was about to urge

his horse across the ground, when the apprentice checked it pointing with his finger; Trenton perceived a flash of light, first wavering and uncertain, then glaring and continued, break upon and bring out the painted gables and rude projections of the narrow street on the opposite side. Then a broad glare lighted up every object in its full colouring, and proportions. The heavy tread, as of great numbers of people, the cry of confusion, the exclamations of anger, contention, strife, and all the mingled discord of a mixed multitude rapidly increased, and at length a crowd moved round the corner of Long Lane, and made their way to the general congregation. A shout of triumph burst from every side, as they thus perceived the accession to their members, and a cry of wild threatning and revenge made the ample space re-echo with malignant fray.

"Now, sir, now, I pray you. My master will be fearful. That last crowd must have passed his door."

"Patience, my man, patience. I will assure Master Flockton about you. There is a fair maiden in that crowd whom I would not see injured for a good deal. Well Heseltine, what do you want?"

"Please you sir," returned the trooper. "Little Metcalfe here says he will stick by me, and I think we could bring poor Susan out of the crush."

"Wait awhile," returned Daubigny. "The crowd may disperse, and then we can see the way it takes, or perhaps the authorities may interfere. At any rate we will not leave her to her fate. Nor shall she be injured without an attempt to save her. And perhaps the younker here can help us. What say you, sir. Can you bear a buffet or two ?"

"Aye, sir," returned the apprentice, readily, "if it be to help a lady. I have handled this pole before to-day."

"I cannot say much about a lady my man ; but it is a woman."

"That is all the same to me, sir!"

"Give us your hand, lad," said Heseltine grasping the palm that was held out to him. You are a right down good one, and shall never want a friend whilst Jem Heseltine can help you."

"Perhaps we shall not need assistance," said Daubigny. Let us stand close, I think I hear soldiers."

The heavy and measured tread as of a numerous and disciplined body came faintly along the ground behind them, and then rapidly increased, till on turning their heads the body of the advancing columns of halberdiers was seen turning up the steep rise of Snow Hill. Trenton and his party immediately retreated to the obscurity of the shaded portion of the field behind the coping of a large hostel on the west.

There could not, according to Trenton's calculation, be less than from four to five hundred halberdiers who steadily wound up, in a column of six abreast, to the scene of action. They were preceded by an officer whose sheathed sword and steady quietness

of bearing, showed him to be well used to times of conflict. After an interval of a few feet, followed two or three squadrons of cavalry, armed to the teeth, and prepared for any encounter.

At the moment of their approach, the wild multitude was at its very height of excitement, and the shouts, cries and groans were truly terrific. Onward however, the military went, and their appearance was only perceived by the endeavour of their leader to force his horse into the thickness of the dense mass. For a moment he was resisted, but putting spurs to his steed, the animal absolutely leaped amongst the multitude, bearing down by his weight alone all beneath him, and severely injuring several. An opening once made, the soldiery penetrated as a wedge into the trunk of some great tree; they appeared to make little opening, and yet they advanced, the commander urging his horse forward as before.

At length, when about a fourth of the

column had entered the crowd, the whole multitude appeared to have become sensible of their presence, and a terrible heaving to and fro among the tremendous crowd immediately ensued. Shoulder to shoulder, and foot to foot, not an inch did they seem to yield, and, for a while, the passive resistance of mere weight was all they opposed to the progress of the soldiery.

But this could not long continue; their absorption in the words of their orator, gave place at last to indignation at the cries of those who had been hurt by the officer's charger, and the hands of several powerful men were stretched out to unseat him. He was, however, apparently only intent upon his object, and as they vainly endeavoured to lay hold of the polished surface of his cuirass, a prick with his heel caused his horse to make another bound, which placed him beyond the grasp of his assailants, while the body of his followers effectually closed up the track against them.

Again, and with a bound, his steed placed his fore feet upon their breasts, but a hundred hands were stretched out to throw him, and his utter destruction must immediately have follow; had not, at that moment, a deafening peal of fire-arms rattled from the carbines of the cavalry. A momentary panic was visible among the multitude, and the instant was seized by the leader, to take advantage of the little space they had left.

"Forward."

The word was obeyed, and the crowd yielded like waves of the sea before the advancing weapons of the soldiery. For a moment, there was a silence, and the mighty mass heaved to and fro like a huge monster agitated by its death throe. Then a wild cry of despair, rage and terror, seemed to break from every side, and, as if space had been suddenly found, every individual of that immense multitude appeared to have a different object and a different way to go.

Again that terrible report pealed through the air, and, at least, twenty more bodies lay prostrate on the earth. Onward the cavalry dashed towards what had been the centre of the mass. The yielding multitude gave way before them, while such as were not quick enough to escape, were ridden down, and lay writhing on the ground.

Daubigny observed the onward rush, and, at the moment of the charge of the cavalry, followed in their rear. Fixing his eye upon the speaker, he had gazed on the little knot that surrounded him, and aided his escape. They had got clear of the cavalry and halberdiers, when a party of the latter closing upon their front, planted their weapons at their throats, and prevented further advance. It was the work of a moment. Trenton spurred his steed; while Heseltine, seizing Susan by one arm, lifted her into the saddle, assisted by the gallant youth, who kept closely behind him, and then leaping on the crupper of Trenton's

horse, burst through the dissolving multitude, and dashing down the narrow lane, with its various and picturesque houses, they were quickly enclosed by the gates of Master Flockton's yard.

By what untoward forgetfulness the outer gate had been left open, the new comers could not divine, but the place around appeared to be filled with the silence of the grave. Every shutter was closed, and every door was fast, and every effort of Edmund Hendsley to awaken the inmates, appeared to be fruitless.

"They have been afraid of the rioters, I suppose," said Edmund; "and now, Master Daubigny, I hope you will excuse the coldness of master's good will. He'll greet you well enough when he knows you are here. But I can let you in."

"For the poor girl's sake, or I would not mind it," said Trenton. "But you must not break in on Master Flockton's good-nature."

"Oh never fear that, sir. I can find a way in."

So saying, he planted a pole, which stood in a corner of the yard, against the doorway of a loft, above the stables, and by the aid of a push from Trenton's hand, soon disappeared through the aperture.

The party waited, for a few minutes, in anxious expectation, when the apprentice appeared at the door of the principal entrance, and ushering them in, Heseltine deposited the poor girl on a couch in the good trader's sitting-room.

## CHAPTER XI.

*Sir Piers*—It was a dream, that, if rightly used, leads to fortune.

*Launcelot*—What is a dream?

*Sir Piers*—The foreshadowing of events which, though a phantasy, is often an indicative of goodness and truth.

ANONYMOUS.

ABOUT the time that Trenton Daubigny passed the barrier on the Windsor Road, Derivale, muffled in his cloak, with soiled attire, and a wearied foot, was pacing the short space of ground between Northumberland House and Whitehall. He had ridden long and hard, and his object in reaching London was to be in time to lay such infor-

mation as should cause the apprehension of the young man whose honesty he had been unable to seduce.

Suffering, therefore, the throng to pass by, he hastened up St. Martin's Lane, and after walking a couple of hundred yards, knocked at the portal of a house of square red brick, with stone mullions to the windows, and was speedily admitted.

Without, there was little of pretension about the place. It was one of those distinguished from the residence of the merchant by its size; and from that of the noble by the plainness of its appearance. But within, it presented all the acme of refinement and the elegance of the day.

One of the most *recherche* of the apartments looked towards the west. It was richly rather than showily furnished and fitted with every thing requisite to provide comfort in the use, or convey pleasure in the aspect. The floor was of polished oak,

but over the middle of it, and covering the greater portion of the room a carpet was spread of the richest manufacture of Turkish looms.

In the centre stood a table of superb workmanship, and inlaid with crystal and lapis-lazuli, resting upon some massive pillars most richly decorated with carving. Around the room were arm-chairs of large proportions, and with couches exquisitely seated with crimson velvet of rarest quality, and having the frames elaborately carved to match the tables. Upon the richly-chased mantel-piece which hung looming, with bold projection, over the deep chimney stood a magnificent candelabra of gold, wrought with such nicety of skill as to double the worth of the costly metal of which it was composed. Behind it was a clock of beautiful workmanship, while beneath, a fire blazed in the ample chimney.

Seated nearly in front of this cheerful

prospect, sat a lady of some thirty years of age. One hand which rested on her lap still held a volume bound in blue velvet, and edged and clasped with burnished gold leather, while the elbow, leaning on the massive centre table, which had been drawn close to the fire, supported her sweetly-moulded chin and beauteous lips. Her light and beautiful feet one crossed upon the other, and partially covered with slippers of purple morocco, adorned with a diamond clasp and gold thread, were resting on the edge of the low fender, as if to catch the warmth of the enlivening blaze.

Her figure was tall and somewhat slightly formed, but moulded with exquisite grace. She wore a boddice of dark purple brocade, fastened in front with turquoise buttons, so as to give the sweetly rounded contour of her exquisite bust, while buttons of gold united by a slight Vandyked thread of similar material ran over the breast to the corner of each shoulder.

A stomacher of pearls, fastened by a clasp of brilliants, secured the band of gold that encircled her slender waist, and gathered the kirtle in her boddice into graceful folds behind. A satin petticoat of the richest amber just relieved the waistband by its tinge, and was made with sufficient scantiness to develope the graceful outlines of her delicate limbs.

Upon her countenance, which was of the purest Italian beauty, there sat an air of offended pride, and occasionally a twitching of her lofty brow showed that the feeling, whatever it might be, was not then to be restrained. From time to time her full dark eyes filled with tears, but they were instantly restrained, and if for a moment she turned her beautifully formed head to catch the distant sound which she hoped was an indication of what she desired, its position was again resumed with a quickness that made the long hair that hung upon her neck and shoulders tremble again.

Olivia D'Ossunna could not thus abide the fancied neglect of the man whom she had favoured with her love, and the very circumstance that she had no legal claim upon his regard, only swelled her heart more proudly at the thought of his neglect.

She had attired herself with peculiar care to welcome his return. Alas! how necessary is it to look to external advantages when the attraction of real worth is lost. There was a lofty mantling of imperial beauty on her flushed countenance which well became the striking elegance of her figure, and the noble costliness of her dress. It was nearly similar to one for which in bye-gone days Derivale had expressed much admiration. At length patience had degenerated into tedium and weariness, and she was about to retire to her couch, when the sound of his footstep startled her from her purpose.

The first impulse of her heart, as the door opened, was to throw herself upon his

breast in a burst of passionate fondness; but there was a coldness, a distance, and a reserve in his manner, which repelled her, and immediately drove her back upon the natural pride of her character. For a few seconds she regarded him with an uncertain aspect.

She alone knew of his various avocations and engagements; and she could allow for the perplexity which the deep and dangerous intrigues in which he was continually involved, were likely to occasion. She waited, therefore, for some exhibition of that power which, through years, she had exercised over his spirit by the unusual extent of her own intellect. She waited in vain; he spoke not. The colour rose higher on her beautiful cheeks, while the marble of her brow seemed to grow whiter as she watched for some expression of affection; but his mind was brooding at the moment over the easiest means by which he could disencumber himself of a burthen now become embarrassing and disagreeable. Sus-

picion of something seemed to strike her mind, as, looking upon him with a proud but half fearful glance, she said in a tone of mingled fondness and reproach that, would have touched anything but the heart of a selfish and ambitious sensualist.

"Derivale!"

The tone came like a sword into his spirit, for even the most obdurate are compelled to respond sometimes to the voice of nature and conscience; but the spirit of evil constrained him, and as his lips ejaculated the reply, worked him to that hardness which sets its face as brass against the promptings of mercy and love. The fair lands and sunny skies, the noble palace and the gay companions from whom he had brought her to degradation, solitude, and grief, rose vividly before him; but the cares which had come upon him, appeared to have indurated his nature, and he replied in a tone that answered but coldly to the heart-fraught utterance of her lips.

"Olivia."

Like a beautiful bird that hears from those that it loves, words which it does not understand, she turned her head first on one side, and then on the other, as if endeavoring to comprehend this exclamation; but the effort to ascertain the state of his feelings, except as to their want of affection to herself, failed; and she was thrown back to the dictates of a heart, which, untrained in the pure school of Christian morals could not recognise the degradation of her position, repelled the mortification of her heart with pride.

"Claridge Derivale," she said, "drawing herself up to her full height. "I have left home, and country, and friends, for your sake; and have sought, but found not an asylum in the home of strangers. For you have I encountered loneliness and regret, because I hoped for love and affection, but I find them not."

"Speak not thus, I entreat you, signora," returned the Jesuit, "for truly, I find the

catalogue of your woes, anything but a pleasant topic."

"Yet does it seem a topic to which your ears must become accustomed," returned Olivia, "and if the affections of one whose heart you have wrung, have no claim upon your regard, still, perhaps, her vengeance may find a voice to be heard."

"Her vengeance!"

"Aye, proud, heartless, and besotted priest, her vengeance!" cried Olivia, raising her arms, as if to imprecate the wrath which she denounced, while her beautiful eyes flashed fire from every part of their orbits. "Can you not see, in the failure of all your schemes, the truth that heaven is against you. There is a lion in you track that shall hurry you to the end you merit."

"And thou, tigress, wilt help him in the onslaught," returned Derivale, as, playing with the little ivory-hilted stiletto, which his finger seemed longing to clutch, he

turned upon her the glare of an eye full of evil.

That glance unseated the affection that had filled her heart for years.

"Aye!" she returned, calmly, while the glare of a basilisk shone in a misty stream from her eyes, "till they tear thy heart-strings like a wild beast. With a deep art hast thou cajoled the leaders on both sides, but I will expose thee to the scorn and contumely which thou dost so richly merit. I will tell thee forth even as thou art."

The knowledge that she was none of infirm purpose, convinced him of the extent of his danger. In a moment he was by her side, —the ready instrument of wrath glittered in his hand; and, in the next instant, might have been dyed in the crimson stream of from her alabaster throat. She stirred not —she spoke not—but looked up into the eyes of her seducer with the calm, steadfast gaze of open and contemptuous defiance. The very beauty which winged the glance, disarmed the murderer. Confused, overwhelm-

ed, and oppressed with shame and passion, he dropped her arm, tottered to his seat, and returned the dagger to its sheath. In the next instant Olivia D'Ossuna was beyond his reach.

## CHAPTER XII.

*Sir Piers.*—Fidelity! I have heard of it, but never understood the name.

*Launcelot.*—Why, fidelity is truth, such as I have borne to you.

A true heart to a true heart, is always safe.

*Sir Piers.*—Thou art always good.

*Launcelot.*—Master you are right; and I will always be true to thee.

ANONYMOUS.

THE morning broke dull and dreary. One of those thick yellow mists with which London is so frequently visited in the winter, hung brooding, like a mantle of misery, over the darkened and desolate city.

Wrapped in his cloak, which only partially protected him from the chilliness of a climate which he detested, the Pere Derivale passed

through the wicket that led from St. Martin's Lane into Long Acre, and, passing hastily by the Duke of Norfolk's deserted house, made his way across the fields attached to Lincoln's Inn. The soil become slippery by the wet, gave uncertain and unsteady footing, and it was not without great exertion that he succeeded in reaching the greater turn-stile which led into Holborn in time to await the arrival of a detachment of horse, whose trumpet he had heard for some minutes before. He did, however, succeed, and as he scrutinised the troop of iron-faced warriors whose visages seemed more than usually grim from the darkness of the morning, and the dank moisture with which their array was laden, he perceived that they carried with them the royalist officers, who had formed the guard and companions in confinement of Sir Edward Martell, while that baronet himself headed the troop, followed immediately by Captain Ellerton.

The man whom he most wished to see,

and in whose possession he believed his lost document to be, was not with them, and it required no small share even of his dissimulation to assume with quietude the manner and tone of the member of the covenant, when addressing one of its most violent and enthusiastic leaders. There was, moreover, in Sir Edward's countenance and bearing, as elated with the thought of entering the metropolis free, and in power where he had so lately been a prisoner and helpless, he moved with a heavy solemnity to the salutations of the several citizens, who, rapidly increasing in number as he advanced, hailed him with "Blessings and success on the brave Sir Edward Martell, the servant of the Lord, and the upholder of his covenant."

"Yea! blessed be the sword of the Lord and of Gideon," said Derivale, for he also was there to meet them. "I pray you, good Sir Edward, hath the cause prospered to the securing its great enemies?"

"The victim hath been given to our bow, and to our spear. The high hath been laid low, and the Philistines are mocked, but whether thy document hath been recovered I know not."

"The cause hath need, Sir Edward, that due diligence be used to find it."

"That, I doubt not, will be done," replied the Covenanter, "but I pray you leave my bridle; for the people press, and we must on our way." With a touch of the spur, he caused his steed to spring forward, while Derivale, who observed the few to have increased to a crowd during his short conference, had some little difficulty to clear his way in the pressure.

It was the swelling and heaving of the popular mind, distressed, excited, and anxious, the remnants of the storm of the preceding day rife with new elements of tumult of a more determined, and dangerous character.

With difficulty Sir Edward made a passage through the rapidly thickening crowd.

The way was at last altogether closed, and as the fierce Covenanter sat, silently balancing in his mind the course he ought to pursue, a rush from behind compelled him to act. Drawing his sword, he commanded his men to turn out the heels of their horses till they got room sufficient to pass. Before the order could be obeyed, an overwhelming pressure was given to the crowd from behind. A yell deep, and terrific, swelled in every variety of accent from the infuriated mob, mixed with the loud curses of the men, the intense shrieks of the women, and the piercing cries of those who were borne to the earth by the rush. The next instant there was a wavering in the narrow files. The line swayed hither and thither. In the crash, Power felt his legs pulled, and, looking unconsciously in the direction with Sir Hugh, he saw the frank countenance of Heseltine at his saddle bow.

"Leave your horses, and follow me, Sir Hugh," said he, quickly, and the next instant the knight was on the ground, with his hands on the trooper's shoulders.

"Maclachlan, ye baste, dhrap the reins." Power whispered, energetically, in the ears of Maclachlan, "and cut away like wildfire. Don't ye say Sir Hugh."

"Aye, mon—aye mon," returned the Scotsman, who perceiving how the case stood, immediately followed Power's example; and the four powerful men acting with all their force, and with united effort, made a little lane in the crowd, and were soon separated from the horsemen by several feet. At the same instant, the crush on the multitude was renewed—the line was broken and every man was left to act for himself. Sir Edward Martell, pressed on all hands, was scarcely able to keep his seat, while Ellerton, hemmed in on every side, made an ineffectual attempt to retain his prisoners.

His cry pointed out the objects of his

care to the trooper next him, who, dropping his pistol, cut with his sword at Maclachlan, who evaded it by a stumble which had nearly thrown him to the ground. The blow fell upon the neck of a woman; a shriek, shrill, piercing, and dreadful, broke through the clamour around; stunned, for a few seconds, the souls of the multitude were stilled, while the blood spirting from the wound flew over the faces of several of the by-standers. It was her last breath; her head dropped upon the shoulder of him before her; she gradually drooped, and her body was, at last, literally trodden, mangled, mutilated, and disfigured, into the earth, from whence it sprung.

But long before that, she was avenged. For an instant, the crowd stood as if petrified with horror, and then a cry for vengeance rose.

In vain the soldiers flourished their weapons; their first swoop was their last. A few hands bled, and a few arms fell; and then the swords were wrested from

their grasp, and all but three besides their leaders were unhorsed, and almost destroyed. These with Sir Edward and Captain Ellerton sprung the rowels into their steeds, and dashed madly onward, overthrowing all in their progress.

The diversion thus made gave the royalist officers time to make way, and they needed no hint to expedite their progress. In less than five minutes they reached a steep acclivity, on which several tall houses were built, and at the entrance of a narrow and dark passage, keeping it from all comers by a strong bar, stood Metcalfe.

"All right, Tip," exclaimed Heseltine, breathless, and almost spent with fatigue.

"Right as an awl, my chum," returned the cobbler.

"Up, up—gentlemen up," cried Heseltine, "for your lives.

They required no second bidding; and following Metcalfe up a rude ladder, found themselves in a dark loft, lighted by a small hole which enabled them to command a

view of the street. Metcalfe drew up the ladder, and turning to the officers said,

"Now, gentlemen, only lie still, and your souls will be safe in their upper leather."

"Still is it, my darlint?" said Power; "that will I, and so the best plan to be so, is to go to sleep. Now, Macky, make yourself easy, for that confounded old Roundhead did not give us much rest."

"Indeed, and ye are na far wrong, Captain Power, so I'll na gather my harns aneath the dra grass," and the two were quickly asleep, while Sir Hugh, too much excited to rest, sat watching the progress of the tumult from the little aperture, and Metcalfe seating himself, as he conceived, became him in the presence of his betters, quickly was, or seemed to be, in a state of oblivion.

## CHAPTER XII.

A glooming peace this morning with its brings.

THE morning again broke gloomily and deadly enough in the loft, and a corresponding depression grew over the party. Despondency, however, was not habitual to any of them; and devoting their time to consultation upon their mode of escape, the day grew on apace, and the obscurity of evening had already cast its shade upon

every object within their hiding-place, before they had decided upon any plan of proceeding.

Hunger was pleading very strongly for attention to the commissariat, when the conversation, low and subdued in tone, was interrupted by something like a sound from below, and immediately a stone struck the wall.

"Hist! hist! Master Metcalfe!" exclaimed a voice.

After a pause, in which it was agreed that this could be no enemy, Metcalfe put his head cautiously from the landing door, to ascertain who it was.

"It's me—it's me, master Metcalfe," cried the party below, in a voice below his breath.

"And who are you," returned the cobbler, in the same tone.

"Jasper Needy," answered the other, "the witless lad of Chaveley; and I've come for Master Daubigny with a basket. Be

quick, for the crop soldier peoples is coming."

The word was sufficient; and letting down a rope, they quickly drew up a basket well filled with provisions, and a bottle of wine, which proved a most satisfactory and timely supply. Jasper again spoke in the same tone as before,

"What in the good name does he mean?" said Sir Hugh Palser; but, before any inquiry could be made of the boy they heard him rudely driven away by the patrol.

This was a disappointment; but it was too great a relief to hear the clank of the soldiers' arms, become lower and lower, as they retired in the distance, to think much of it.

With such a feeling, an elation of spirit arose in the whole party, and the viands were discussed with a zest which is often not experienced in far nobler halls of entertainment.

The intimation of Jasper would have remained unnoticed, but that, in the division of the fare thus opportunely provided, a paper was discovered in the cheese—which, at first, excited much apprehension. It was to the effect that they were desired to quit their hiding place, within two hours after sunset, and meet the writer near to the Alder's Gate. When there, at the signal of a white handkerchief; they were to rush on the guard—make their way for half a mile up the road to the gorse well near Islington, where, under a cluster of thorns, horses would be found tethered and waiting for their use.

With such an expedition before them, the time, though brief, wore heavily on; but, at last, the clock of old St. Paul's, boomed the appointed hour; and, after as careful a scrutiny of their neighbourhood, as they could make, one by one, the party dropped into the narrow lane that ran up behind the extensive stabling and other premises of the Saracen's Head, on Snow Hill, to Smith-

field. Here the halt for another rencontre was made; but there was no moving object perceptible throughout the whole of the wide space; and with rapid, but noiseless, steps, the party made their way to the high hedge of elder trees and thorn bushes, which skirted the north side of Long Lane; then turning suddenly to the left, by the remains of the old Carthusian convent, they took post under the shelter of a ruined cloister, to observe what might occur.

For awhile the panting of their own breathing, prevented their hearing anything. This, however, soon sufficiently subsided to enable them to perceive that no one was near, but the two sentinels at the gate, whose voices, as they talked together to wile away a dreary watch, could now be very plainly heard.

The silence, however, had not continued more than a few minutes, when a dusky object was seen silently to glide across the obscurity of the faint light of the stars which now spangled the sky. Another im-

mediately after passed with the same noiseless steps close by where they stood, and Sir Hugh, in a momentary suspicion of treachery, had raised his hand, uncertain whether to strike, when it was suddenly suddenly seized, and a cry of "Hist!" met his ear, so distinct, yet so low, that it seemed as audible as a trumpet; while, in reality, it was unobserved a foot from the spot where it was uttered.

Sir Hugh turned at the sound; his suspicions immediately disarmed by the sight of the diminutive frame of the half idiot Jaspar, who, unfolding a white handkerchief, gave the signal which they had anticipated. At the next instant there was a rush at the gate—the javelins of the musketeers fell with a loud clang to the ground—they were both thrown heavily to the earth with a half uttered execration; and, at a sign from the boy, the whole party rushed forward to the assistance of their friends; the sentinels were instantly gagged, bound and

carried outside the gate; the gate itself was as silently locked as possible, and the royalists once more felt themselves free under the face of heaven.

One fervent pressure of the hand was the only recognition the moment allowed; and Daubigny, as he turned to lead the way to where the horses were tied—for it was he and Heseltine by whom it had been accomplished—only remarked upon the necessity of haste. They found the horses as they had expected, and quietly dropping the keys of the city gate into the brook, which ran hard by from Islington to the hamlet of Clerkenwell; then struck out over the hill to Hampstead, turned short by the Heath to the left, halted neither bit or bridle, till they reached a low hostel at Slough —where, notwithstanding that midnight had long been past they found a groom waiting to receive and attend to the tired animals which had done them such trusty service.

The busy aspect of the place occasioned by the arrival of the travellers, was soon changed to its former quietude, and the inmates were wrapped in sleep. Daubigny had insisted on his friends, who had of late suffered most, occupying the several lodging chambers, while he took up a soldier's bed in a seat in the common sitting room; and was soon like the rest, wrapped in the deep sleep which fatigue and danger generally occasion.

He had not lain in this way above a couple of hours, when there was the slightest imaginable sound, as though the latch of the door was moved, and a draught of air entered the apartment, which scarcely bent the flame of the expiring torch. Again the quietude of death prevailed, and the silence remained unbroken, save by the deep breathing of the sleeper. Then slowly, and by almost imperceptible degrees, the door moved upon its hinges, and the face and breast of a man

appeared beyond the opening, scrutinizing every object, and then the head was again withdrawn.

In another moment, the man stood within the room. He was dressed in the foreign garb, frequently worn by the gipsies of the period. His head of dark, shaggy hair was covered with a red, woollen cap. A coarse, dark green garment covered his arms and lower limbs to the knee. Over this covering, was a sort of drab tunic, much soiled, which was secured by a broad, leathern belt. Within this last was stuck the sheath of a large stiletto-looking knife, which now glittered in his hand. His legs were naked, and the red, swarthy hue of his skin gave to his whole air and appearance an aspect of singular cunning and ferocity.

For an instant, he stood as if measuring his distance, and then, with three long strides, made as noiseless and as rapid as the footfalls of a cat, he stood leaning with

a sneer of triumphant hatred over his victim, his hand upraised, and the deadly weapon gleaming in the light of the flambeau, which was placed above the fireplace. He gradually lowered the knife, till its point came within two inches of the heart of the sleeper, and then again slowly raising the weapon to a height above his head, he was about to strike the blow, that would have stopped alike the trials and the days of Trenton Daubigny; but a shriek, loud and terrific, shot through the house. In a moment, the young soldier was roused from his sleep. He saw a woman, in the costume of a gipsy, with a child in her arms, standing in the doorway, and the bravo about to give the fatal blow. Astonished and half stupified with surprise, he knew not what he was about; but seizing, with the instinct of self-preservation, the arm of the wretch, who was about to murder him, grasped the clenched hand in such a way as to loose his hold upon the weapon, threw him violently backward to

the other end of the apartment. Then setting his foot upon his breast, forcibly held him to the ground; and, while threatening him with instant death, demanded what he was about to do.

"To kill you," was the cool reply.

"For what reason?"

"Because I was hired."

"Who hired you?"

"That you must find out."

"On your life depends your reply."

"Then take it," returned the bravo.

Trenton was moved by the stolidity of the fellow. To take his life was far beneath a man of his generosity, and throwing the knife from him, and removing his foot from the fellow's chest, he suffered him to rise.

No sooner, however, had he done so, than the wretch sprung, with the agility of a beast of prey, and placing his hands on each side of his opponent's throat, endeavored to strangle him.

But again the same Providence watched

over him, and pushing, with the desperation of a mortal struggle, the gipsy fell again with violence to the ground. Mercy appeared to be utterly and entirely out of the question, and Trenton felt justified in immediately dispatching a being who had twice attempted his life; but the silent yet inexpressibly touching supplication of the fellow's wife, prevailed, and turning away with the determination not to be again assailed, he motioned to the man to depart.

All this had passed with almost the rapidity of thought, but as the bravo was leaving the little tenement the rest of the royalists had gathered round their friend. The knife upon the ground, the disordered dress, and flushed appearance of Daubigny, and the sight of everything around, showed the nature of the assault; Heseltine was about to seize the fellow when he sprung from the open door, and he and his companion were speedily lost in the obscurity without.

## CHAPTER XIII.

I am one
Whom the vile blows and buffets of the world
Have so incensed, that I am reckless what I do
To spite the world.

It was on the second morning after the incidents recorded in the last chapter that two individuals—a man and a woman—were seated on the side of the way in one of those open sand lands which constitute the borders of the counties of Berks and Hants.

Their resting-place was a sort of hollow

in the bank from which gravel had been dug for the repair of one of those devious ways which wind from the great track that leads from London to Bristol, and penetrates through Hants and the adjoining counties southward to the coast.

Above them rose one of those high continuous copses composed of a mixture of elder trees, thorn and bramble which within a short period afterwards became those beautiful landmarks of hedgerow, which whatever may be thought of the richer productions of more favoured climes give the appearance at least of the most cultivated garden country of the world. Along its base ran a limpid brooklet, here murmuring over the pebbles that formed its bed, there lost amid the tangled overhanging grass that covered its course, but, wherever it ran, perceptible by the richer luxuriance of the herbage that bordered its tiny stream.

At this spot the road formed a wide and open reach, worn in the middle by the passage of travel, bounded on one

side by a young wood of compact growth, the intervals between the trees being filled up by close brushwood. Lying on his back was the fellow, who had lately attempted the life of Trenton Daubigny, his stalwart limbs spread out upon the sward, while his eye turned alternately from one side to the other watching, both ends of the road, with that stealthy rapid glance of watchfulness and acute sight by which his tribe are said to be distinguished.

Beside him sat the female whom the reader has already seen in his company; several years younger than her husband, and with a set of features of regular formation from which beamed feelings different from those by which he was influenced. As a reward for some daring act of intrepidity, she had been given by the superior of their tribe to him for wife, and when once joined, after the simple ceremonial of their tride, although her heart would have gone elsewhere, with that superior sense of truth and honour by which woman has ever

been distinguished, Bertha clung to her husband till a sense of duty grew into affection which wound with life-long tenacity round her heart.

The man seemed for some time to regard her glances of affection, with the most perfect indifference, but at length as if overcome by the depth of the emotion with which she could not help observing his surveys of the road, he angrily exclaimed:—

"Well, woman! What would you?"

"Oh Rimin!" as if unable to speak further.

"Go on woman," returned her husband, desirous of shrouding his feelings.

"Oh Rimin, you know of what I would speak," returned Bertha, her voice tremulous with emotion.

"How should I know," returned he gruffly.

"You know Rimin that you are waiting here to take the life, if you can, of that young man. It was not by such deeds that you got your station in our tribe."

"Curse on the tribe. I am not one of them now," answered the gipsey, with a fearful scrowl.

"Yes, but you might be, and you may be," answered his wife, "and you know that Stanley promised to admit you again, and make you his lieutenant. And what do we get here ?"

"I have said I would do it."

"What! after he gave you yours. Would you take the life of him who might have killed you, but let you go for the sake of your wife and child."

Rimin frowned with mortification and malignanty combined.

"Oh look not so, Rimin." Bertha returned. "Remember what that good man said, who stopped with our company when he got away from those rampant soldiers—how the good are rewarded, and the wicked punished—how evil always goes with the bad man and kills him at last—and what would you get by this deed ?"

"Gold !"

"And what would you do with the gold!"

"Go to my own country, and the tribe, —throw off the cursed bondage of this lead faced clime, roam where I would; rest as I would—be free as the antelope that roams the wild woodland of the eastern country; get followers, and live as a prince among my people."

"Was there ever anything happy brought with the price of blood?"

The ideas which had been growing up in the imagination of Rimin received a sudden shock by the inquiry of his wife, and his confused sense of moral duty was beginning to show itself in his constrained and abrupt manner, when the distant sound of travellers was heard beyond the avenue. Rimin turned with the ready rapidity of his race to his hands and knees, and hastily and eagerly scanned to ascertain who the new comers were, while Bertha grasped the babe instinctively to her heart in closer embrace. In a minute or two afterwards, a cloud of dust rose on the hither side of

the turning in the road, and immediately afterwards a cavalcade, consisting of a considerable number of persons, was seen advancing at a somewhat rapid rate towards them.

The gipsy waited for a moment to observe their appearance, and then giving a hasty signal to his wife, they sprung up the bank, and were completely lost to sight.

On a nearer approach of the party, they proved to amount to between twenty and thirty in number, variously attired, but the whole of them persons of rank and condition, attended by their immediate servitors, and a few men-at-arms fully appointed for the field.

In front, rode the powerful and somewhat burley form of Sir Edward Martell, whose saturnine countenance formed a strong contrast to the dark and handsome features of Signor Derivale, bearing upon the very brunt of them that deep insidiousness, masked by a well-assumed air of sincerity; and which was only detectable by the

gathering lines at the corner of the eyes, and the weariness, which in those periods when no unusual demand of passion was made, caused that involuntary, yet hardly observable, twitching, which is so common with of persons of deep emotions.

Between them was the slight and elegant form of Edith Dornford, plainly dressed in the riding costume of the time. A round feather drooped over her velvet hat, fastened by a gold clasp of curious workmanship. Her countenance indicative of the deepest anxiety, and a restlessness and apprehension, plainly perceptible. This was more particularly the case whenever Derivale turned to address her. He was using all the arts of a refined courtier to ingratiate himself; but his attentions were productive of little besides disgust, though the feeling was evidently much restrained by fear.

Shortly before reaching the place where the gipsy had been standing, the greater portion of the escort, led by Sir Edward Martell, turned off on a winding bridle-

road. From this moment, the attention of Derivale assumed a more offensive character, and taking one of the hands of Edith, he pressed it to his lips; but it was immediately withdrawn with an indignant frown.

"Nay, proud girl," broke forth the libertine. "It seemeth hardly wise thus to treat your devoted slave for his affection."

"Affection!" returned Edith, "is it consistent with affection thus to oppress a soldier's daughter?"

"Troth; and I can find no other reason,' Derivale replied. "It may be, that we, who are the children of a more genial clime than this of your dull, cold England, may experience stronger feelings than those who first draw their native breath within its influence, and I, in the present instance, have too great a cause of impulse to refrain." And he bowed with all that grace of which he was so consummate a master

The flush of insulted virtue, in a moment tinged the cheek of Edith, and the

acute indignation which she experienced, flashed from her blue eyes with an intensity that would have abashed even a bolder man than Derivale, had it not been arrested by the slight but coarse laugh of the grooms behind who seemed perfectly to comprehend, and to approve the object of their master's observation.

In an instant the whole danger of her position struck like a thunder-bolt upon her heart, and the poor girl, sick as death at the peril that hung over her, bowed almost to her saddle bow with that internal sickness which naught but the sense of total inability to resist the most terrible of misery ever can produce.

Edith Dornford experienced for some instants to the full the impress of this overtaking and overwhelming calamity. Again she sunk, and would have fallen but for the intrepidity which always, in one degree or other, characterises the righteous, came to her aid, and though sick at heart and so pale that every shadow of colour had passed

from her cheek, she determined to trust to the wisdom and the succour of that Providence whose ways are often inscrutable, but whose power is always sufficient to succour those who serve him. Her features were death-like, but her heart was recalled and determined. She remained silent.

The strong emotion of his prisoner would have been soon perceived by Derivale, although he would never have suspected its excess; for, like all bad men, he believed the weaker sex to be practising that *finesse* which, with the worse portion of them, with whom he had been acquainted, was not an unusual expedient. But his attention, at this moment, was drawn to another object. The Gipsy and his wife had emerged from the wood, and stood on the bank awaiting to confront him.

On the countenance of the man there was a sullen, discontented scowl, while that of his wife exhibited an anxious timidity which she appeared unable to control.

"Ah, my wily messenger I declare,"

exclaimed Derivale. "Well, how sped you, my worthy Rimin?"

"Better than I deserved on such an errand," returned the vagrant, as he advanced to receive the purse, which the Jesuit held out to him.

"You finished, I suppose—"

"Yes, by being turned out of the house scathless by the very man whose life I went to take."

"Well, better fortune another day—You see I have other business now in hand."

"No other day for me, Signor," the gipsy replied.

"Oh, yes! there will, and you will persuade him, my pretty Bertha," returned Derivale, chuckling the young woman under the chin with an impudent leer.

The frown, which had been sufficiently dark before on the face of Rimin, became black as midnight, and, with a cry, he rushed on the Jesuit, and struck him with all his power. But the blow fell harmless on the concealed hauberk of the

Jesuit, and in the next instant his sword passed twice through the body of the gipsy, and he lay writhing in a bloody death-pang on the road. A scream of the most terrible agony burst from the miserable woman, and, as she fell senseless by the body of her husband, the form of Edith, insensible from fright and horror, sunk from her horse.

"Curse on these women," exclaimed Derivale, as he directed his attendants to place Edith Dornford on the steed; but the words were scarcely out of his lips, when he was called to another encounter. A small party of horsemen charged among his group, and his right shoulder was struck with immense force as he felt his weapon fly to the other side of the road, while his party, brought back by the encounter, were rapidly giving way, when the fate of the day was again changed. Sir Edward Martell arrived to the succour of his friends, and after a few moments of violent struggle, Trenton Daubigny found himself alone, surrounded, and in the midst of

enemies. By his side lay the bleeding figure of Derivale. In less than a couple of hours he was led along the streets of Reading, in disguise, in pain, and once more a prisoner.

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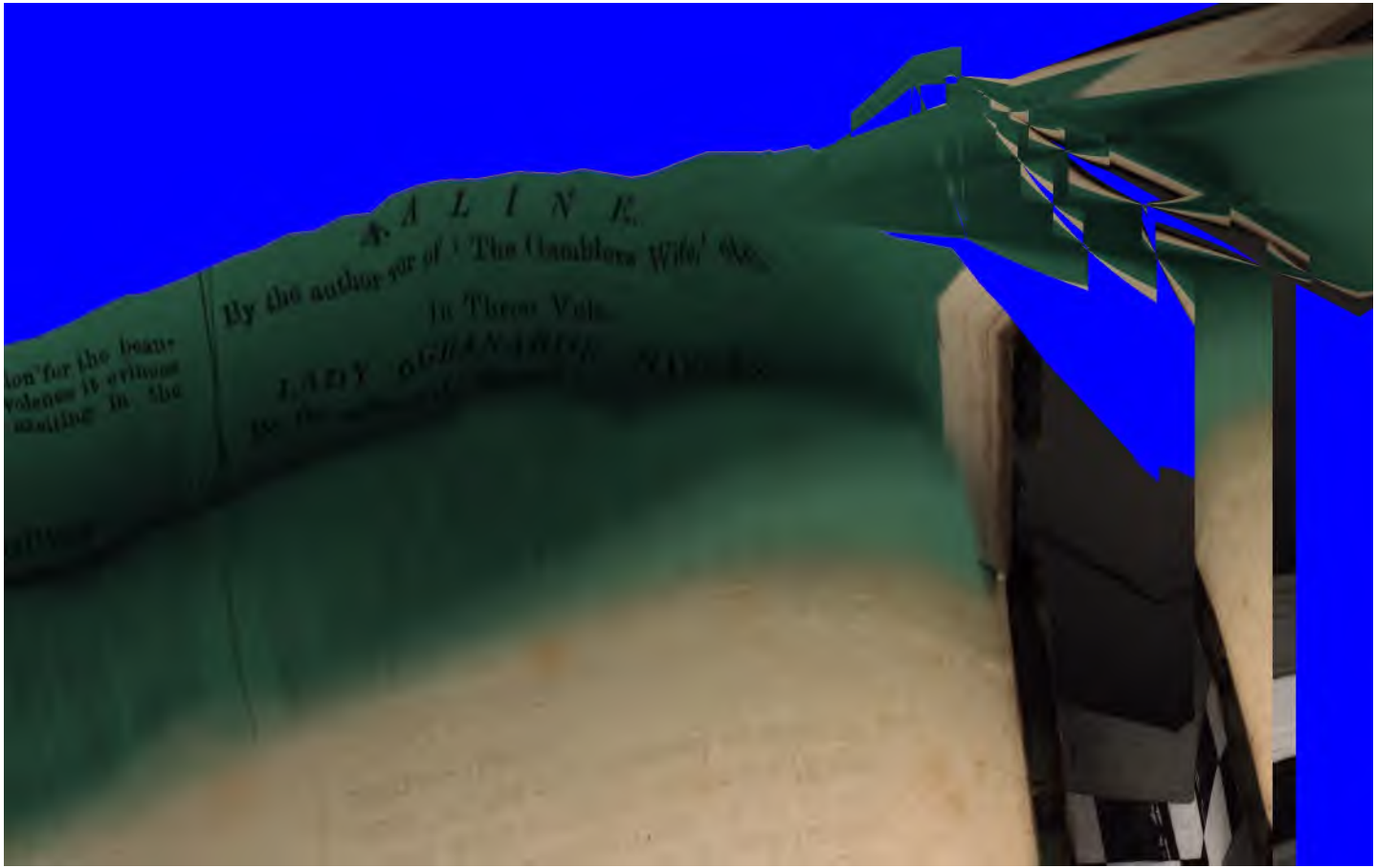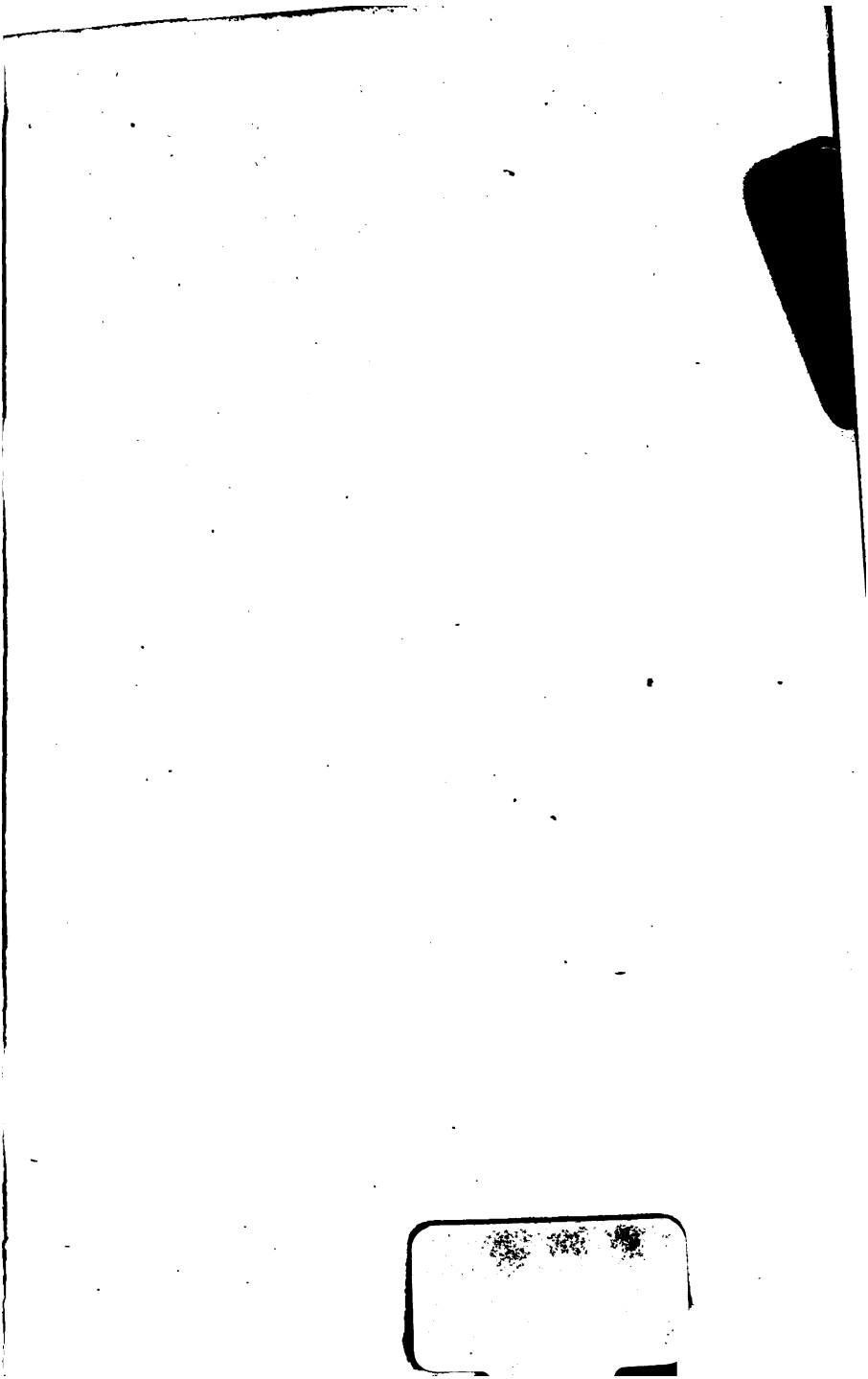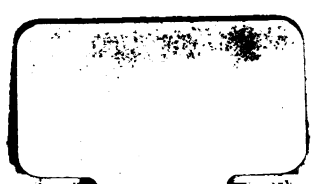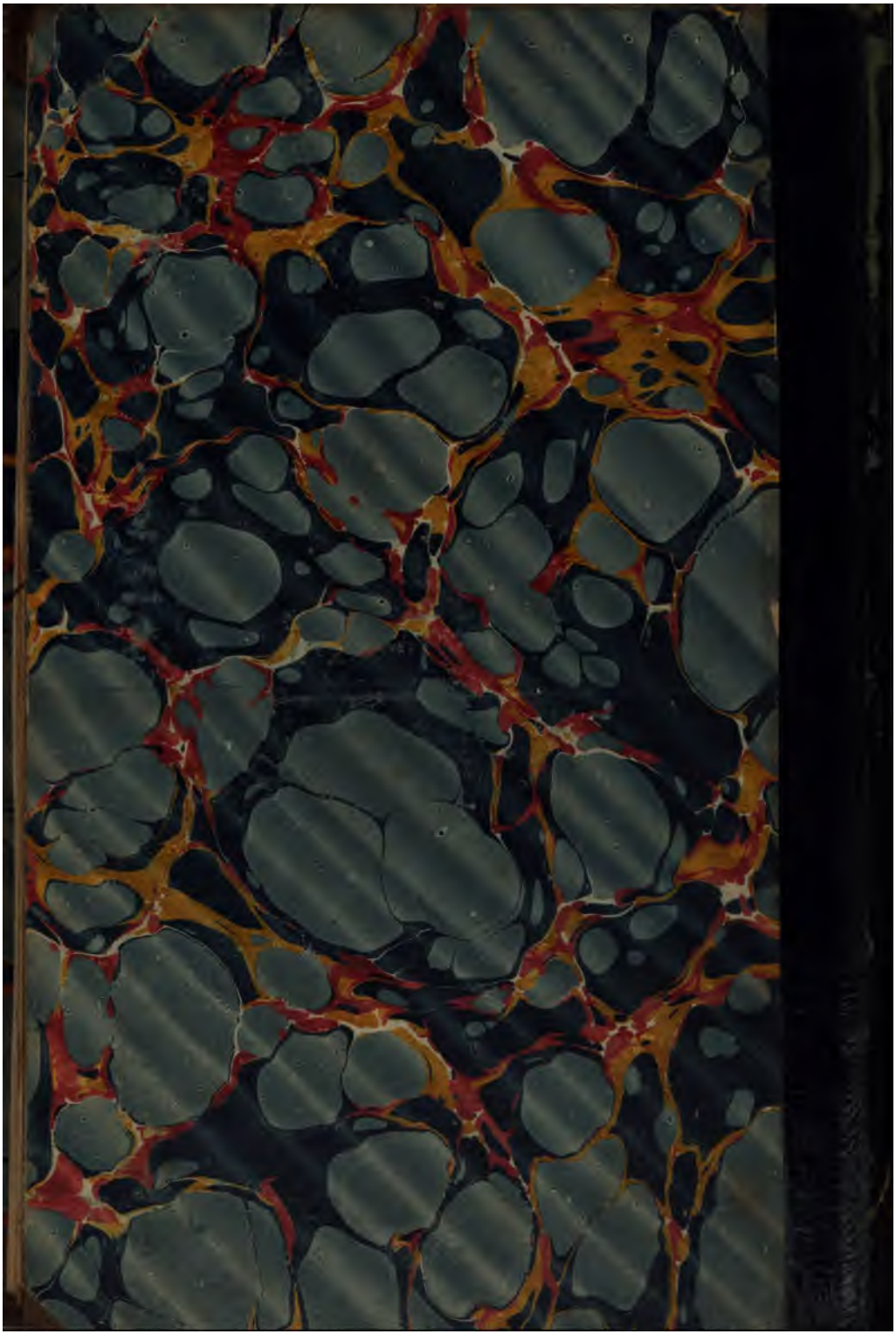
A L I N E.
By the author or of 'The Gamblers Wife' &c.
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